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Kant on the Role of Beauty in Moral Motivation

SCOTT R. STROUD

Determining what role the experience of the beautiful plays in Kant's system of morality is difficult. While some suggest it holds an instrumental role in moving us to uphold the dictates of morality in specific situations, this seems objectionable due to the internalism of motivation in Kant's reading of moral worth. I argue that the best reading of the use of the beautiful in moral matters seems to be as a symbolic impetus to motivate agents to cultivate themselves into the "ruler" of their inclinations by showing them proof of the possibility of successfully pursuing the dictates of virtue. On such a reading, the experience of the beautiful holds less of a constitutive role in moral motivation in given situations (such as the role an inclination to love others would hold in an interpersonal situation), and more of a general motivational push toward cultivating one's ability to will from the moral law through disinterested, rational activity.

I. Introduction

Kant famously argued in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790, *CJ*)[1] that the beautiful is a symbol of the morally good (§59) and that it is particularly valuable in moral motivation because it prepares one to love something without interest (§29, General Remark). In other words, the beautiful is important for morality because it assists with the *comprehension* of and *motivation* toward an agent's duty. This appears problematic, however, as Kant strictly forbids heteronomous motivations (inclinations) from calculations of moral worth in doing one's duty, as well as the use of examples in determining moral rules, in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785, *GMM*). Some scholars, such as Allen Wood, have argued that this "anti-inclination" reading is not an accurate portrayal of Section I of the *GMM*,[2] whereas others (notably Paul Guyer) have argued that Kant's later work does allow for the cultivation of sentiment as an instrument in the doing of one's duty.[3] The question remains, however, how much and what type of an instrumental role can the experience of beauty have in the demands of morality?

The relationship between the beautiful and moral motivation is a contested, but important, topic in Kantian exegesis. In what follows, I will explore this relationship, focusing on the role of the beautiful in relation to the upholding of one's duty. In Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797, *MM*),[4] the relationship between feeling and rational action is complex—Kant wants the agent to willingly do what duty commands but he does not want the agent to rely heavily on static inclinations, as these inclinations only offer inflexible drives that are located outside of the rational part of the human constitution. The real use of the beautiful seems to be as a symbolic spur to motivate agents to *cultivate* themselves into the master or ruler of their inclinations, not as a counter inclination to any given inclination in a moment of decision. Thus, it appears to hold less of a constitutive role in moral motivation in given situations (such as the role an inclination to love others would hold in an interpersonal situation), and more of a general motivational push toward cultivating one's ability to will from the moral law (through disinterested, rational activity). In order to explore such a reading of the beautiful qua symbol of the morally good, I will first examine what concerns could lead Kant to look for such an "instantiation" of freedom. Kant has deep doubts about the possibility of certainty concerning one's own disposition, and the beautiful as a symbol of morality can be seen as a response to this doubt. The beautiful as symbolic of the morally good will be discussed, focusing on how it provides a sensible instantiation/presentation of the morally good, albeit analogically. Many will argue that this simply allows for *comprehension* of one's moral duty; I will argue in the final section of this paper that this comprehension is also linked to *motivation*, although in a qualified manner with reason at the helm. The beautiful shows us that moral behavior/willing is possible in the world of sense, and as such, provides the concept of the moral law with its own motivating force on the willing agent.

II. Is there any true Virtue in the World?

To truly provide a reading of how the experience of the beautiful aids in the project of morality, we must understand the nature of Kant's moral theory. In the *GMM*, Kant provides a stringent reading of moral worth in terms of an agent's actions. Section I of that work details the source of moral worth in human actions and maxims. What is morally good must be absolutely good for Kant, and he points out that all "virtues" and characteristics, such as strength and coolness, can be used for vicious purposes, rendering their value only conditionally good—dependent upon certain purposes, situations, etc. Considerations of certain outcomes are also conditional, as these results can be thwarted by unfortunate luck, natural circumstances, or put to a harmful use. Thus, the ultimate conclusion of Section I is that the good will is the highest,

unconditioned good (*GMM* 4:396). The notion of good will is integrally connected to the notion of duty, which "contains that of a good will though under certain subjective limitations and hindrances, which . . . bring it [the good will] out by contrast and make it shine forth all the more brightly" (*GMM* 4:397). A human being can possess this good will, but such a will requires a constitution that includes alternate temptations, such as the inclinations. These factors result in the human being not being subjectively necessitated by the moral law; instead, duty is a command upon the agent. The individual agent is *objectively* determined by this notion of duty, which stems from the imperative of the moral law; *subjective* determination, on the other hand, appears to be the domain of control of the individual agent with his or her reason and inclinations. What is crucial to this conception of duty is that an action should be done *from* duty, not merely in accord with duty; only the former has moral worth, whereas the latter could be done for less-than-worthy reasons (self-love, greed, etc.).

The individual agent is subjectively determined by his or her maxim, a principle of volition within the subject. A practical law, on the other hand, is an objective principle of volition that all should have (*GMM* 4:401). Individuals are objectively necessitated by the moral law, but are not subjectively necessitated by it (otherwise they would be "holy wills," constrained to will from duty in every instance). The individual agent can have moral worth if and only if he or she acts from duty. This, however, leads to the question—what is duty? To this question, Kant provides his analysis of the moral law in Section II of the *GMM*.

Duty, for Kant, is integrally connected to the source of determination of an individual rational agent.[5] In Section II, he analyzes the concept of the moral law and its relation to rational beings in general in order to discern the possibility of such an imperative. Kant operates on the assumption that everything in the world that we can experience (including our own actions) must operate according to some sort of law (*GMM* 4:412). The unique feature of a rational being is that he or she can represent his or her possible actions in accordance with a representation of laws (principles). This capacity to formulate principles or maxims upon which the subject acts is constitutive of an agent's will (*Wille*). The particular maxim stemming from one's will is subjectively contingent, since reason does not always determine it (*GMM* 4:412). All rational beings are subject to objective principles of action, which Kant labels as "imperatives." Some of these are hypothetical, commanding a certain action upon certain conditions. What Kant wants for the foundation of morality is a moral law (imperative) that commands categorically and in an unconditioned manner.

The various formulations of the categorical imperative need not be examined at this point; the important aspect of the *GMM*'s description of moral

worth through the activity of willing is in its demand that the moral law itself be both the *motive* and the *rule* for action. As motive, the moral law shows pure reason in its practical function, separate from all traces of sensibility or inclination—an action is performed from the knowledge of its status as upholding duty.[6] This demand on the motivation behind one's actions seems to many quite a strict demand. Kant even questions whether such virtue (moral worth) even exists, stating, "One need not be an enemy of virtue but only a cool observer . . .to become doubtful at certain moments . . . whether any true virtue is to be found in the world" (*GMM* 4:407). The difficulty of truly possessing a good will lies in two concerns: the constant temptation offered by human nature and the epistemic limitations of the agent in knowing his or her disposition/character.

The first concern addresses the constant striving that is involving in the moral activity of human agents. In both the *GMM* of 1785 and the *MM* of 1797, Kant's story remains quite consistent—the human agent must make fundamental choices concerning his or her self-conception and maxims that are open to the impulses of nature.[7] These impulses come in to the deliberative process through the sensuous inclinations. Indeed, Kant writes of the will as placed between the a priori principle of the moral law and the a posteriori incentives of the inclinations, with duty stemming from the former (*GMM* 4:400). Inclinations as needs are not objects of respect, but can simply be approved of or liked given their efficacy toward given ends. Instead, the will that determines itself *from* the form of universal willing itself is the only "object" that can truly merit respect in Kant's sense. Inclination as habitual desire often functions as an obstacle that the human agent must overcome in doing his or her duty—virtue stands as the ability to overcome such obstacles and to act from the moral law (*MM* 6:380). Temptation is a constant companion through the presence of inclination in the human constitution, and as such, true virtue is always in jeopardy.

The more serious doubt about the existence of virtue comes from the very locus of moral worth. Kant always holds serious epistemological reservations about the scrutability of one's maxims that lie behind one's actions. In *The End of All Things* (1794, *EAT*),[8] Kant argues against absolute judgment of others and even of one's own motivations, questioning, "For what human being knows himself or others through and through" (*EAT* 8:329)? In the *MM*, Kant echoes this concern, arguing, "For a human being cannot see into the depths of his own heart so as to be quite certain, in even a *single* action, of the purity of his moral intention and the sincerity of his disposition, even when he has no doubt about the legality of the action" (*MM* 6:392). Human beings have trouble seeing into their own intentions, to which they have privileged access compared to the external perspective occupied by other agents. Epistemically, one can never be certain that others are acting *from* the moral law, or even that

one's own will does not flow from a deep self-conceit initiated by "the dear self" that Kant indicts as a possible hidden motive behind all actions conforming to duty (*GMM* 4:407). In the *MM*, Kant reasons that

> The depths of the human heart are unfathomable. Who knows himself well enough to say, when he feels the incentive to fulfill his duty, whether it proceeds entirely from the representation of the law or whether there are not many other sensible impulses contributing to it that look to one's advantage (or to avoiding what is detrimental), and that, in other circumstances, could just as well serve vice (*MM* 6:447)?

Even though reason commands what one is supposed to do as his or her duty, Kant is acknowledging that one can never be absolutely certain that he or she is actually acting from such a respect for reason's commands. Thus, a true exigency is raised concerning the ability of agents to actualize what the moral law commands of them in will and action due to the powerful sources of temptation within human nature and the ultimate epistemic opacity of the maxims of an agent. The third critique, through its analysis of the beautiful and of the sublime, allows for a sensible presentation of the possibility of moral action in the world of nature, providing the agent with not only a comprehension of the demands of morality, but also with a motivation toward its realization.

III. The Beautiful as the Symbol of Morality

In the judgment of taste concerning the beautiful, Kant finds that the pleasure evoked is of an extremely unique kind. The object, through its form, spurs a harmonious play of the faculties of the imagination and understanding. This "free play" (*Freies Spiel*) of these two faculties in the observer is inherently pleasurable, due to its enlivening of the natural faculties of the human mind. This pleasure is not directed toward an interest or a determinate concept, or it would stem from the agreeable or the good. Instead, it is a "disinterested pleasure," and it merely refers to the "fit" between the object's form and the subject's faculties. It is in this fit that the subject senses a "purpose without purpose," which Kant concludes is the "*mere form* of purposiveness" (*CJ* 5:221). It seems to the subject as if nature had designed the beautiful object being observed with an eye toward such a freedom of the imagination; instead of the understanding dictating (theoretical) legislation onto the imagination and its data, the aesthetic experience of the beautiful involves an equal free play among the subject's faculties.[9] This experience of nature[10] is important in that it is an experience of freedom for the agent—not actual proof of such a transcendental vocation (such would violate the Third Antinomy from the first critique), but as a presentation of such a quality.

In §59 of the *CJ*, Kant describes the role that the beautiful can play in indirectly representing such an important aspect of our capacities as a rational

agent. Giving an alternate account from §29's analysis of the intellectual interest in the beautiful, Kant argues in §59 for another important function the beautiful can play in relation to a subject's awareness of moral value.[11] In addition to all of the other effects of the judgment of taste on the individual, this section argues that it serves as a symbol of the beautiful, and as such, aids in the subject's awareness of the possibility of moral action in the world. Kant begins this section by highlighting the only way our concepts can be shown to be "real"—through the provision of some sort of intuition of them. In regard to empirical concepts, such intuitions are "examples;" whereas if they are pure concepts of the understanding, they are "schemata" (*CJ* 5:351). Importantly, the ideas of reason can never be given adequate intuitions. They can be *presented*, however, in what Kant labels a "hypotyposis" (*CJ* 5:351)—a presentation of a concept as sensible through means other than the giving of a corresponding empirical intuition. In the case of schematic presentation, a corresponding intuition of a concept of the understanding is given a priori. The other option for such presentation that rises above mere empirical instantiation in intuition is presentation through the symbolic—in which case the power of judgment provides a rule concerning the form of the reflection between object and concept similar to that of schematization, albeit eschewing the intuition itself as a representative token of the concept (*CJ* 5:351). Thus, a concept of reason can be presented via intuition, but not directly in intuition; one does not "see" freedom or one's moral vocation, but one can experience something analogous to it from his or her phenomenological perspective.

Such symbols use analogy to exhibit a concept that has no corresponding intuition. The power of judgment first applies a concept to the physical object at hand, and then applies a rule of reflection concerning that object to the conceptual object that lacks representation. Thus, the monarchial state is represented in Kant's famous handmill analogy, which draws upon the rule of similar causality. While Kant is not explicit about the content of this analogy, Kirk Pillow finds that he is drawing attention to how both the handmill and the despot mangle anything that is fed to them—in the former, substance, and in the latter, the freedom of human subjects.[12] The actual concept is not contained within the presentation, but merely the rule or symbol for reflection of the subject; the handmill acts as a symbol for the causality of the despotic state, facilitating reflection concerning the similar operation of each in their domain. The symbol becomes a presentation of the concept that has no direct representation, thereby allowing the individual subject to grasp the "reality" of the concept in question.

The beautiful is the symbol of the morally good due to its presentation of several key features of the moral experience. It is not *identical* to the moral experience, but is similar in its form and operation (its "rule of causality") that Kant finds it to be a valuable symbol of the former experience (which seems to

lack a phenomenal representation). Kant even labels the experience of beauty as a type of duty we expect of everyone else, a claim that may cause some misinterpretations unless tempered by his moral philosophy. Kant surely cannot be talking about a duty to experience the beautiful, as he clearly leaves any such duty out of his moral writings (such as the *GMM* and the *MM*). Instead, he posits in the latter work that respect for natural and animal beauty is an indirect duty to one's self. The important aspect to this discussion is that Kant, unlike Schiller, is not claiming that taste is a necessary and sufficient condition for moral worth; instead, as I will argue in the following section, Kant sees the symbolic presentation of beauty as an instrument for the development of rational control over one's inclinations and the attainment of moral worth (virtue). Kant's strong language in §59 stems from the fact that the symbol of morality, the beautiful, is experientially open to all humans because their faculties are all similar in arrangement and can be naturally "activated" in free play by a myriad number of beautiful objects. What is demanded of everyone is the claim inherent within a judgment of taste—it demands the assent of all rational subjects sharing the same mental faculties (*CJ* 5:353).

It is in this judgment of taste (i.e. of the beautiful) that each subject gains a symbolic presentation of his or her moral vocation qua free being. Kant points out that in such an experience, "the mind is at the same time aware of a certain ennoblement and elevation above the mere receptivity for a pleasure from sensible impressions, and also esteems the value of others in accordance with a similar maxim of their power of judgment" (*CJ* 5:353). The very experience of the beautiful highlights the capacity of the agent to be separate from mere sensibility in terms of pleasure, which will be linked by Kant to his or her ability to be causally moved by non-sensuous reasons (the moral law). The power of judgment, through such judgments of taste, sees itself as giving law to itself; this is contrasted by Kant to the "heteronomy of the laws of experience" in terms of empirical judging (*CJ* 5:353). In the latter instance, the power of judgment has laws foisted upon it by the understanding; in the former case (judgments of taste), the power of judgment is the source of its own reflective laws.

As stated previously, this giving of laws to one's self involves the power of judgment in both the inner realm of mental faculties of the subject as well as with general (formal) qualities of external objects. Thus, the intersubjective validity of judgments of taste comes from the power of judgment's connection to the ground of inner freedom of the subject qua moral agent—this is the supersensible that connects theoretical with the practical faculty to form a unity. As intimated in the previous two critiques, Kant is always concerned with how the two varieties of reason serve each other or combine together; he posits in §59 that the very ground that allows for claims of taste to be universally valid also relates to an *experience* (albeit symbolic) of such a substratum of freedom.

Whereas the previous portions of the "Critique of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment" deal with reasons why judgments of taste claim intersubjective validity, Kant argues in §59 that the beautiful can provide a particular subject an experience of his or her moral freedom (through symbolic presentation). This portion of the paper will not detail the reasons for the intersubjective validity of such judgments of tastes, but will instead turn to how the beautiful operates as a symbolic presentation of the morally good.

Kant points out four main similarities between the experience of the beautiful and the operation of the morally good (*CJ* 5:354). Initially, he notes that judgments about the beautiful please immediately through the act of reflection (not through concepts, as the good does). The immediacy of feeling *after* the beautiful or the good is an important common element in this symbolization of the latter in the former. The second aspect concerns the nature of this pleasure; both the beautiful and the morally good lack a connection to antecedent desires. Instead, interests arise *after* the experience of either the beautiful or the morally good (moral feeling, empirical/intellectual interest in the beautiful, etc.). The pleasure that is produced by both stems from the fact that human nature involves elements that transcend sensible determination—in the case of the morally good, the moral law is the non-sensuous source of our autonomy; in the case of the beautiful, our mental faculties and their interaction with nature highlights a source of pleasure that is "outside" of the sensuous. The third important similarity is that the freedom of the imagination in judging the beautiful object is "in accord with the lawfulness of the understanding" (*CJ* 5:354). In morality, the freedom of the will agrees with itself qua reason through its own rational lawgiving; in beauty, it is as if the imagination was giving law in accord with the lawful dictates of the understanding, leaving them outside of their normal hierarchical relationship. Fourth, "the subjective principle for judging of the beautiful is represented as **universal**, i.e., valid for everyone, but not as knowable by any universal concept" (*CJ* 5:354). The concepts involved in morality are also universally valid, but they are determinate, resulting in a strict demand for validity and adherence from subjects. The beautiful involves such a universal validity, but the lack of determinate conceptual content leads one away from *demanding* of others that they recognize a given object as beautiful. While the beautiful and the morally good differ in important ways, Kant finds that there are enough similarities in how they are experienced to label the former as a symbolic presentation of the latter in an agent's interaction with the physical world.

As the symbol of the morally good, the beautiful shows that the worlds of nature and freedom can converge quite closely. While judgments of taste fall short of being an *actual* phenomenal experience of freedom,[13] they do point to the realm of the moral *through* the world of nature. This linking of the two realms through the sensible experience of the beautiful qua beautiful object is

Kant's answer in the *CJ* to doubts about the possibility of realizing the strict demands of morality in the physical world. Duty involves the idea of a will that includes subjective hindrances (inclinations), and as such, mires the challenge to duty in the physical world; if one's will is to be virtuous, it must surmount the physical forces (inclinations) in the individual *in the physical world*. The symbolic presentation of the morally good through the beautiful supports the possibility of such inclinations being overcome in a human agent by respect for the moral law. Beyond the "ought implies can" mantra of earlier works, Kant postulates more concrete evidence for the "reality" of the demands of morality—the only difference is that the presentation of the beautiful in terms of existent objects provides for the possibility of future realizations of moral worth in a given agent's will. While radical doubt can still be held in terms of the ultimate epistemic uncertainty of one's true moral worth, Kant finds solace in two prongs of his critical philosophy—the straightforward command of the moral law and the possibility of the physical world being amenable to our moral vocation qua autonomous agent.

In addition to being a mere symbol of the morally good (aiding in comprehending moral experience/duty), Kant finds that such a presentation can have definite effects in moral development. Humans typically associate words of beauty with implications of moral quality (*CJ* 5:354), but the actual experience of the symbolic presentation of the morally good can have a greater effect on an agent. Discussing this value of beauty as a symbol of the morally good and its associated judgment of taste, Kant states

> Taste as it were makes possible the transition from sensible charm to the habitual moral interest without too violent of a leap by representing the imagination even in its freedom as purposively determinable for the understanding and teaching us to find a free satisfaction in the objects of the senses even without any sensible charm (*CJ* 5:354).

Several crucial claims are housed in this statement. First, one sees that Kant is explicitly linking the judgment of beauty with moral development, albeit not in a causally necessary manner. Second, the way taste operates involves the transcending of mere sensible charm to a purposeless purposiveness that transcends the agendas of physical creatures. Taste is important because it is a means to self-cultivation from mere animality to the type of autonomous agent moved not by sensibility but by practical reason.[14] Thus, the imagination (and its interaction with other mental faculties) is experienced as free from the constraints of nature in terms of purposive determination, and also in its assisting the individual in locating pleasure free of sensuous interests.

Here at the conclusion of §59, Kant makes the important claim that receptivity to the commands of the moral law is heightened by and through the exercise of taste, leading one to suspect that beauty qua symbol holds more

potential than merely clarifying the nature of duty. Instead, the beautiful can function in moral motivation. Even if the beautiful as a symbol of the morally good shows one that moral worth may be possible in the world of nature, the question of how this realization can serve as a motivational force remains. The next section will explore this issue, and argue that the symbol of the morally good (the beautiful) not only assists in the comprehension of duty, but also serves in a motivational capacity as well. This crucial convergence of the two factors in moral duty (awareness and motivation) highlights the value of taste in moral development for Kant, a value that is not prized as the only way to moral development, but as a powerful tool to reach such ends.

IV. The Role of the Beautiful in Moral Motivation

How does the beautiful as a symbol of the morally good *actually* function in leading one from "sensible charm" (interest) to "habitual moral interest?" Paul Guyer provides a detailed examination of the role of beauty in moral development, drawing particularly upon the analysis of indirect duties and duties of self-perfection in the *MM*.[15] The basic issue explored in his analysis was how to reconcile the effects of aesthetic experience (as "moral sentiments") with the strictly reason-based concept of duty enunciated by Kant. Guyer relies heavily on the "Doctrine of Virtue" in the *MM*, especially the analysis of self-cultivation through the *instrument* of aesthetic experience.[16] This section, while agreeing with Guyer's general strategy, wishes to pursue a complementary way that the beautiful qua symbol functions as an instrument to moral development. The value of the beautiful will be evidenced not only by showing that duty's demands are possible, but also by showing its role in the motivating of moral willing on the part of the agent.

The beautiful is valued as a symbol of the morally good because it involves the important qualities of immediate pleasure, no antecedent desires, necessity of judgment, and universality of scope. All of these aspects experienced in the beautiful point toward the possibility of actual moral behavior as demanded by the moral law. How exactly can the beautiful, through such qualities, act as an instrument to *motivate* an agent to act from duty? It cannot simply do this through cultivating inclinations (such as sympathy) that will be sufficient to accomplish the demands of duty; Kant is clear in Section I of the *GMM* that morally worthy actions must be done *from* duty. Indeed, as Henry Allison points out in his analysis of overdetermination in Kantian maxims, inclination does not seem to facilitate truly overdetermined maxims. If both the want to act from duty and the want to act from inclination are needed to determine the will, then the action is not really from duty and cannot be a candidate for moral worth. If duty by itself was a sufficient motive, then the presence of sufficient inclinations do not harm that maxim's association with moral worth—as Allison states, it is simply "*with* but not *from* inclination."[17]

The conclusion of Section I of the *GMM* is reaffirmed in light of possibly motivating inclinations in that the sufficient influence of duty as a motive (if present) will *always* check contrary inclinations and motivate agents regardless of similar inclination-based motives. Thus, as a motivating factor, the beautiful cannot create the inclination-based conditions that move an agent to moral action. Instead, I would argue that two explanations emerge concerning how the beautiful qua symbol can assist in moral motivation: it may create "beneficial" inclinations as counterweights to "tempting" inclinations, and it may function as purely rational support (as symbol of its possibility) to duty.[18]

Inclinations as Instruments in Moral Willing

Guyer explores the first path in his work on Kant's aesthetic theory.[19] In such an account, emotions/inclinations are cultivated and purified so as to develop a disposition toward morally good action. Indeed, Kant discusses the value of sympathy and other such emotions in terms of moral sensitivity to the plight and happiness of others (*MM* 6:456). Nancy Sherman gives a similar reading of the value of the emotions in her work, also emphasizing their epistemic, attitudinal, and motivational uses.[20] In addition to the epistemic value of the emotions in the recognition of moral situations and needs, Sherman argues that Kant values agent attitudes as duty-based responses and as supporting action from duty. Both of these analyses are interesting in terms of the positive motivational weight they give to inclinations, but the danger remains that inclination could usurp duty as the sufficient motivation for a given action. The problem Kant has with inclinations as either the rule or motive of moral action is that they are inherently inflexible and contingent—eventually, a situation will be broached that a given inclination cannot handle in terms of our intuitions of what moral worth demands. "Beneficial" inclinations such as sympathy are no exception, hence Kant's extreme (and often misread) example of the depressed (but formerly sympathetic) agent in the *GMM*. While inclinations such as sympathy (and pathological love) may be able to move us to help others, they cannot be counted on to always move us in the right way since they are static components of nature. Kant even claims that while they may be helpful or conducive to morality, inclinations cannot possess unconditional worth because there are situations in which they would fail to have value *unless* we presuppose a "good will" behind their implementation in specific actions (*GMM* 4:393).

Emotions can be cultivated to serve not only as positive pushes toward acting in accord with moral duty, but also as instruments to *decrease* the temptation offered by "harmful" inclinations (those contrary to duty). This use of certain inclinations to decrease the "pull" of other inclinations can be seen as facilitating the moral action of an agent, with the key component of willing *from* duty intact. Keeping in mind Allison's Incorporation Thesis, one must

acknowledge that the rational agent has the final say as to exactly what is incorporated in the maxim they adopt.[21] Kant in the *MM*, however, is quite clear that inclinations exhibit some type of force for the agent to incorporate them into his or her maxim. They are not neutral elements to be incorporated solely at will, but they are instead forces that *incline* the agent to incorporate them. Thus, virtue in Kant's later work on morality is conceptualized as "the capacity and considered resolve" to withstand "what opposes the moral disposition within us" (*MM* 6:380). Inclinations are classed as "impulses of nature" that "involve obstacles within the human being's mind to his fulfillment of duty and (sometimes powerful) forces opposing it" (*MM* 6:380). One must note that inclinations by their very nature involve obstacles to willing actions *from* duty because they are motivations that are extraneous to duty. They may sometimes support dutiful actions, but they still provide a temptation (motivation) to act in accord with duty but *from* a separate (non-duty based) reason. In many cases, inclinations as impulses of nature involve an active impediment to the fulfilling of duty—for instance, when fear or self-love prevents one from risking harm to one's self in the protection of others. What appears more in line with the Kantian analysis is not that the experience of beauty cultivates emotions/inclinations that will be constituitive of the maxim to act in accord with duty, but that the experience of beauty can cultivate emotions (such as those developed by disinterested love and pleasure) that decrease the power of any given inclination.

This sort of account is not without precedent in the western tradition. For instance, René Descartes provides a similar account in his 1649 work, *The Passions of the Soul*, where he deals with instrumental ways to counter harmful emotional reactions to stimuli. Desiring the ability of reason to be its own master, but knowing the ideality of this goal, Descartes concludes this book by offering two remedies to controlling "renegade" or harmful passions (emotions) by using the mechanism/instrument of the passions. Initially, he prescribes "forethought and skill by which we can correct our constitutional deficiencies, in applying ourselves to separate within us the movements of the blood and spirits from the thoughts to which they are usually joined."[22] In such a remedy, one is using long-term preparation to associate a certain stimuli with another passion—habituating ourselves to respond in a different manner (such as with courage, instead of fear, at the sight of poisonous snakes, through constant exposure to non-harmful snakes). This approach would pit us against similar stimuli and attempt to habituate a different response to them; thus, after such "practice," the passions will prepare an action via bodily changes that is more in line with what the power of volition should (or wants to) will. The second remedy involves "thinking" about other thoughts, not the one that the passion normally inclines us toward.[23] Thus, one is countering the habituated response that is in place by activating other habituations that in turn can mitigate the

original passion or cancel it out. For example, when one is afraid of an oncoming army, they should think about how standing and fighting will be looked on as brave; the animal spirits (the physiological cause of the passion) that the fearful object invokes can be countered by the animal spirits summoned by thoughts of bravery. The point of such a tactic is to make it easier for the will to act in line with courage (in this example); while the will apparently has the power to act contrary to such a passion, Descartes finds it much more probable and felicitous to prepare the situation such that the act of willing will not be so difficult (directed in opposition to strong physiological states, i.e., passions).

Like Descartes, Kant (especially in his later writings on morality) looks for ways to strengthen the human disposition to morality against inclinations *by* employing inclinations. The main difference, however, is that Kant always insists that the desired moral disposition is that of willing an action *from* duty, not merely from habituated responses to natural stimuli (*MM* 6:383-4, 387). Thus, cultivating the disinterested love or respect from the experience of beauty qua symbol of morality assists in willing from duty precisely because it *decreases* the pull of contrary sensible inclinations in terms of what the agent incorporates in his or her maxim. If the temptation of any given inclination to be the sufficient reason for an action can be reduced by other (contrary) cultivated feelings, then the task of acting from duty will be comparatively easier for the agent. This is perhaps what Kant is after in the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1800, *APV*)[24] where he argues for the regulation of the mind via certain emotions. Commenting specifically on the "principle of apathy," he warns about the "blindness" caused by emotions. A natural counter to this is apathy—"the wisdom of Nature has planted in us a disposition for apathy in order to hold the reins provisionally, before reason attains the necessary control" (*APV* 7:253). In some cases, Kant seems to advise that the emotions can be used in such a way as I have been arguing by claiming that nature has given us (in addition to moral motives) "those motives of pathological (sensuous) inducement as a temporary surrogate of reason" (*APV* 7:253). One could see how such an apathetic emotion could be what Kant is referring to as "disinterested love" in regard to the experience of the beautiful—it serves as a counterweight against the immediate pull of the inclinations, and allows for the ascendancy (eventually) of reason (viz., action motivated in accord with the moral law).

Notice that one cannot eliminate all obstacles to willing—virtue in the *MM* and duty in the *GMM* insist on the key element of subjective hindrances to following the dictates of the moral law. What one can do is to develop a disposition that is less clouded by powerful inclinations and more controlled by reason, in this case through the disinterested love and pleasure of the judgment of taste. What may be worrisome here is a growing reliance upon such emotions or inclination as a vital adjunct to moral activity. Kant notes in the *APV* that

"emotion taken by itself is always imprudent; it makes itself incapable of pursuing its own purpose, and it is therefore unwise to allow it to arise intentionally" (7:253). Inclination grows in strength, and there is no guarantee that what is now in line with virtue will be helpful in fulfilling its demands tomorrow (or in different situations). Kant points out the problem with this reliance on inclination in his *Religion within the Boundaries of mere Reason* (1793, *RBR*),[25] where he includes "impurity" of the human heart and its need for other incentives in addition to that of the moral law as part of the propensity to evil (6:30). To avoid an over reliance on inclinations stemming from the experience of the beautiful as impure "means" or "instruments" to moral willing, it is best that I turn to another promising explanation of the power of the beautiful qua symbol of morality.

Moral Comprehension as Moral Motivation

In addition to adding inclinations that counterbalance harmful inclinations, I want to argue that the experience of beauty is useful as an instrument for morality because it assists in the internal motivation of the moral law. Kant seems to desire such an internalism of the moral law, insisting even in the Doctrine of Virtue that "*inner* freedom" is "the capacity for self-constraint not by means of other inclinations but by pure practical reason (which scorns such intermediaries)" (*MM* 6:396). The notion of virtue through inner freedom for Kant must not involve the Cartesian playing of inclinations against themselves in an end game for acting in accord with morality, but must instead always reduce to an agent incorporating respect for duty into his or her maxim that determines a particular action. It is the will (*Wille*) as pure practical reason that must determine one's use of inner choice (*Willkür*), and not any stimuli from the world of nature. What is at issue here is the hidden premise that Guyer identifies—reason is the active part of human nature and any determining influences from the natural world on the human result in that agent being passive and not worthy of moral merit/value.[26] How can the "passive" effects of the experience of beauty then assist the agent in being an active adopter of morally worthy maxims?

The experience of the beautiful does help with the transition from pleasure based in sensibility to "habitual moral interest" through the inculcation of disinterestedness, but also through the cognitive effect of experiencing a physical presentation of moral freedom (albeit symbolic). Such a motivational "force" is really not a constitutive force; instead, it assists in the agents themselves being the active cause of their actions.[27] A useful place to build an account of such moral motivation that relies on the internalism of the moral law is the "Doctrine of the Methods of Ethics" at the end of the *MM*. In this section dedicated largely to how ethics is to be taught and practiced, one can see a role for the experience of the beautiful. Section I of this part of the *MM*

details the teaching of virtue to students in an attempt to motivate them to *use their own reason*, whereas Section II discusses the state of mind they should have when practicing virtue. Earlier in the *MM*, Kant pointed out that the moral incentive must be increased by doing two things—by contemplating the dignity of the law in its purity and by practicing virtue in one's actions (*MM* 6:397). What Kant insists on is that the contemplation of the law itself should (ideally) be the motivation for the doing of duty (the practicing of virtue). If this is not the case, then the moral law itself would not be the incentive, and there is no need to insist on duty being done from duty (contrary to the purity of one's disposition demanded at *MM* 6:446). Thus, moral education is less indoctrination and more a facilitation of knowledge of the law that possesses a strong motivational force of its own.

Given this reading, §59 can be seen as a putatively effective instrument not only in teaching morality, but also in aiding the general comprehension of and motivation for moral action. The experience of the beautiful *is* an experience of what is required in moral activity; the key features to moral willing (disinterestedness, necessity/universality in judgment, etc.) are all present and experienced by the aesthetic subject, leading one to value the experience as one indicative of the freedom involved in moral activity. While one's autonomy cannot be observed in the physical world, objects inspiring such judgments of taste can be observed, and thus can be symbolic presentations qua natural objects that the world is amenable to our moral vocation. In the "Doctrine of the Methods of Ethics," Kant analyzes the value of examples in moral pedagogy—examples are not constituitive of morality, since "a maxim of virtue consists precisely in the subjective autonomy of each human being's practical reason and so *implies* that the law itself, not the conduct of other human beings, must serve as our incentive" (*MM* 6:480, emphasis added). Examples do not give us the rule or motive of virtue, as these come from subjective autonomy, which is derived (not experienced) from the subject's own practical reason.[28] What examples give, through a sensible representation of dutiful action, is "proof that it is really possible to act in conformity with duty" (*MM* 6:480). The nature of this "proof" is interesting, though, as examples of actual agents acting in certain ways cannot escape the epistemological doubts about the veracity of an agent's dutiful maxims broached in the *MM* (6:392, 447) and the *GMM* (4:407).

From another angle, Ted Cohen points out that a good will is complete in itself (it determines itself from duty), not in reference to external ends of nature; however, whenever we see examples of people acting "from duty," what we actually see is a will that appears to be "realizing external ends."[29] Both the possibility of doubt about motives and the inscrutability of maxims must leave such examples powerless to prove the possibility of moral action. We can never be certain that our own actions really stem from duty, so any example of another person supposedly acting from duty surely cannot serve as

"proof" that an agent can actually act from non-sensuous motives in the world of nature. What comes closer to providing proof is the experience of freedom implicit in the judgment of taste. The imagination is experienced as being free from the legislation of the understanding, and both are seen as being involved in a free play that is pleasurable as if designed with the harmony of humanity (and its mental faculties) with the world of nature in mind. The use of examples in the teaching of ethics is important not so much because it *elucidates* the details of the moral law, but because it *motivates* compliance with the law through the experiential demonstration of its possibility. Thus, the experience of the beautiful can motivate agents to moral action not because it instills forceful inclinations, but instead merely by showing the possibility of moral action. The incentive, for Kant, always remains the law itself; showing the possibility of this incentive in action is the role of examples, or in line with the argument of this paper, the special benefit to aesthetic experience of the beautiful.

Kant, however, also sternly rejects the use of habit and habituation in any pedagogy or explanation of moral action. Habits are merely "lasting inclination[s] apart from any maxim, through frequently repeated gratifications of that inclination; it is a mechanism of sense rather than a principle of thought" (*MM* 6:479).[30] If the goal of human moral action is to become a being that actively determines itself from duty, how can Kant recommend the experience of beauty qua symbol of the morally good if it results in "*habitual* moral interest" (*CJ* 5:354, emphasis added)? Much more attention is needed than available in the remainder of this paper to completely explore this intriguing issue, but one promising answer will be suggested. Perhaps it is not the motivation for moral action that is habitual, but instead the agent's frame of mind of that displays consistent responses that *seem* like habituated reactions. Part of the solution to this puzzle comes from Kant's analysis of the moral ascetic Epicurus—he eventually applauds such a man, "For who should have more reason for being a cheerful spirit, and not even finding it a duty to put himself in a cheerful frame of mind and make it habitual, than one who is aware of no intentional transgression in himself and is secured against falling into any" (*MM* 6:485)? What Kant is claiming is that the stoic (the model of virtue in Section II on "Ethical Ascetics") does not make it a duty to become *habitually* cheerful, but aims at being cheerful through the *realization* of the sacrifices necessary for one to be virtuous in the world. Thus, the comprehension of virtue serves as a motivating force for certain emotional responses on behalf of the agent (his or her cheerful and valiant reaction).

If the comprehension is strong enough, the "ever-cheerful heart" of Epicurus will also be evident in the comprehending agent. The disposition of the agent that wills from the idea of the moral law is cheerful (to observers) due to the comprehension of the demands of morality and the nature of the external world. Indeed, this comprehension leads to this attitude (the "stoic motto") as a "kind of regimen for keeping a human being healthy" in the face of the hardships often demanded by virtue in light of the world's structure (*MM* 6:484-

485). Thus, this "outer" disposition of cheerfulness is not a habit that needs to be formed as if commanded by duty, but is instead a healthy offshoot of the comprehension of the nature of virtue. This account of the "habitual" element that can result from aesthetic experience seems to dovetail nicely with Kant's reply to Schiller in his *RBR*. In a lengthy footnote, Kant responds to Schiller's close causal linking of the aesthetic to the moral by pointing out that "a heart joyous in the *compliance* with its duty (not just complacency in the *recognition* of it) is the sign of genuineness in virtuous disposition" (*RBR* 6:24n). The constant demand on the agent to improve his or her conduct and maxims "effects a joyous frame of mind, without which one is never certain of having *gained* also *a love* for the good, i.e. of having incorporated the good into one's maxim" (*RBR* 6:24n). The act of knowing and trying to will the good results in such a disposition, but is not caused by such a disposition (therefore, one has no duty to habituate such a response/frame of mind). What appears habitual about the moral interest resulting from the experience of the beautiful may be the same cheerfulness and joyousness that results from the comprehension of virtue and its demands; this comprehension (in this case experienced through the beautiful qua symbolic presentation) consequently results in motivational dividends for the agent in terms of his or her trying to perfect his or her disposition to one that wills from the purity of the moral law (*MM* 6:387).

The experience of the beautiful is powerful in showing us the nature of the morally good in this world, which results not only in motives to will action from duty itself, but also to display the outer trappings of such an agent committed to continual moral improvement. The beautiful *experientially* instantiates key aspects of the moral disposition, and as such, serves as a motivational force for an agent to continue in the sort of activity required by morality. Kant, contra Schiller, sees the aesthetic experience of the beautiful as a *useful* means to moral comprehension and action, but not as a *necessary* method in attaining such goals. What links the comprehension provided by the experience of the beautiful qua symbol and the motivation to will from duty is not habit, but the certainty of knowledge concerning human value. In Section I of the "Doctrine of the Methods of Ethics," Kant discusses the issue of an "original disposition" of human nature through the pedagogical device of getting an agent to consider the inability of natural pains, hardships, and suffering to deprive him or her of what makes one as a rational agent superior to the value of nature. What is in the human being that can be trusted with maintaining this superiority and dominance, asks Kant? The answer is said to lie beyond the grasp of speculative reason, but this "very incomprehensibility in this cognition of himself [the agent] must produce an exaltation in his soul which only inspires it the more to hold its duty sacred, the more it is assailed" (*MM* 6:483). The beautiful, as symbol of the morally good, does not directly answer this question via speculative insight, but instead gives an experiential "hint" that such a trumping power exists not only within the human agent, but also within the human agent qua being situated in the natural world. The theoretical

incomprehensibility is maintained such that exaltation continues, but the comprehension of the possibility of such a source of moral value within the agent (i.e., freedom) serves as impetus to the continued willing of action from the moral law. Such a comprehension of the possibility of our being virtuous in a world that often evinces a clear division between self-interested motives and those respecting the moral law can serve as a powerful motivational force for an agent to engage in the project of moral cultivation.

Notes and References

Paul Guyer and David O'Connor are to be thanked for their comments on this manuscript.

1 Parenthetical references to Kant's work will be made using the volume and page numbers of the *Kants gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter). The translation of Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* to be used is *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (Trans. Paul Guyer & Eric Matthews, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001). It will hereafter be referred to in the text as "*CJ*."

2 Allen Wood, "The Good Will," paper presented at the 2001 University of California, Berkeley Philosophy Colloquium, September 20, 2001.

3 Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom* (Cambridge University Press, New York, 1996), Chapter 10.

4 The translation of *Die Metaphysic der Sitten* to be used is found in *Practical Philosophy* (Trans. Mary J. Gregor, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996). Referred to in the text as "*MM*."

5 For a full reading of the formulations of the categorical imperative and their relation to duty, consult Paul Guyer 's treatment in Chapter 5 of his *Kant on Freedom, Law, and Happiness* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000).

6 It is important to note the various valences possible in the "upholding" of such duties —they can be merely negative ("do not do action *x* "), or they can be positive (such as in the wide duties as beneficence and cultivation of talents). What is common to both is that moral worth accrues to the agent when he or she refrains from an action or undertakes an action *from* the idea of duty.

7 Of course, Kant 's conception of moral worth and action changes over the course of his critical writings. This point, however, seems fairly consistent.

8 *Der Ende das alle Dinge*, translated in *Religion and Rational Theology* (Trans. Allen W. Wood & George Di Giovanni, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001).

9 For more detailed accounts of this interaction, consult Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (2nd Edition, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1997),

Chapter 3, and John R. Goodreau, *The Role of the Sublime in Kant 's Moral Metaphysics* (The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Washington, D.C., 1998), 100-108.

[10] Kant of course finds various problems with the fine arts and their relationship to beauty, and believes that the paradigm case of beauty must come from natural objects and scenes. For alternative thoughts on this matter, consult Salim Kemal, *Kant and Fine Art* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1986).

[11] Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom*, 315.

[12] This reading of the analogy is given by Kirk Pillow, "Jupiter's Eagle and the Despot's Hand Mill: Two Views on Metaphor in Kant," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 59 (2001), 195.

[13] Goodreau, *The Role of the Sublime in Kant's Moral Metaphysics*, argues that the sublime is an actual experience of our noumenal nature. This is a very strong claim that does not seem supported by the textual evidence; what can be reasonably claimed of the sublime and the beautiful is that they involve both the realms of freedom and nature, and use an experience in nature to *imply* certain conclusions about our supersensible nature. For an additional approach to moral value of the sublime, see Scott R. Stroud, "Living Large: Kant and the Sublimity of Technology," *Teaching Ethics*, 4 (1), 2003, 47-67.

[14] This is the type of agent that is discussed through the formulations of the categorical imperative in Section II of the *GMM*, especially in regard to the "Formula of Autonomy."

[15] Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom*, Chapters 9 & 10.

[16] For instance, Guyer argues that if our response to beauty can be seen as an instrument toward moral development, it may be included in a "general duty to cultivate *all* means toward the development of a morally good disposition" (*Kant and the Experience of Freedom*, 317). The specific nature of this instrument and how it functions in moral motivation, however, are the focus of the final section of this paper.

[17] Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge University Press, New York, 1990), 118. Further discussion of overdetermination in light of the Incorporation Thesis is available in Henry E. Allison, *Ethics, Evil, and Anthropology in Kant: Remarks on Allen Wood's* Kant's Ethical Thought, *Ethics* 111 (2001), 598-599.

[18] I will leave aside the issue of mere "legality" brought up in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, translated in *Practical Philosophy*, Trans. Mary J. Gregor, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996). At 5:71-72 in the second critique, Kant points out that dutiful action done from feeling/inclination contains *legality*, but not *morality* (moral worth). These are both presumably preferable to failing to act in accord with duty or to intentionally transgressing duty. A similar discussion of merit is had at 6:227-228 of the *MM*. What I explore in this paper is the use of the beautiful as an instrument in enabling agents to act in such a way that they are morally worthy, not for achieving mere legality.

[19] Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom*, Chapters 9 & 10.

[20] Nancy Sherman, *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue* (Cambridge University Press, New York, 1997), 145-151.

[21] Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom*, 97, and Henry E. Allison, *Idealism and Freedom: Essays on Kant's Theoretical and Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, New York, 1996), 118-123.

[22] René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, (Trans. Stephen H. Voss, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 1989), Article 211.

[23] Ibid., Article 211.

[24] The translation of *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* to be used is *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (Trans. Victor Lyle Dowdell, Carbondale, Southern Illinois Press, 1978).

[25] The translation of *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloâen Vernunft* to be consulted is located in *Religion and Rational Theology* (Trans. Allen W. Wood & George Di Giovanni, Cambridge University Press,Cambridge, 2001).

[26] Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom*, 344-345.

[27] For further discussion of what I call "the problem of force" in Kant's moral theory, see Scott R. Stroud, Rhetoric and Moral Progress in Kant's Ethical Community," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 38 (4), 2005, 328-354.

[28] For a further explication of examples in Kant's thought and a comparison to modern theory concerning examples, see Onora O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason: Explorations of Kant's Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, New York, 1989), 165-186.

[29] Ted Cohen, "Why Beauty is a Symbol of Morality," *Essays in Kant's Aesthetics* (Edited by Ted Cohen & Paul Guyer, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1985), 230.

[30] Kant also disparages habits as moral tools/instruments at *MM* 6:383-384, 6:407, and 6:409.

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Perfectionism between Pragmatism and Confucianism[1]

PENG FENG

Perfectionism, as defined by Thomas Hurka, "is a moral theory according to which certain states or activities of human beijings, such as knowledge, achievement and artistic creation, are good apart from any pleasure or happiness they bring, and what is morally right is what most promotes these human 'excellences' or 'perfections'."[2] Since perfectionism affirms "affirm both self-regarding duties to seek the excellences in one's own life and other-regarding duties to promote them in other people," it usually be criticized that "the latter duties, when applied to political questions, are hostible to liberty and equality".[3] But some neo-pragmatists, such as Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam, Stanley Cavell, and so on, argue that perfectionism can soften contradictories between self-realization and democracy and endorse both liberty and equality. In this paper I propose to articulate an alternative ideal of perfectionism based on Confucianism, which differs significantly from prominent pragmatist versions but can also overcome the contradictories between private and public perfection.

I begin with my redescription of pragmatist perfectionism based on Richard Shusterman's narrative in *Practicing Philosophy*.[4]

I For Richard Rorty, the contradiction between self-realization and democracy which perfectionism aims to overcome is between private and public affairs. Rorty insists that self-realization is an essentially private affair, and public democracy can do nothing but give a chance for individuals in the very beginning of their self-creation, i.e. "to equalize opportunities for self-creation and then leave people alone to use, or neglect, their opportunities".[5] The concerns of self-creation must be entirely segregated from the realm of public democracy, and vice versa. Thus Rorty's strategy to reconcile the two ideals of self-realization and democracy is simply to make a rigorous distinction between them and keep them totally separate. Self-realization can only be reached through the unlimited private pursuit of new selves, and in contrast, democracy is merely a necessary social condition with social tasks that do not fulfill the ends of self-creation. In order to keep self-creation pure, Rorty limits it to the realm of language. So Rorty's models of self-realization are the strong poet and the ironist who constantly redescribe themselves with maximum or totally novel vocabularies. The processes of self-perfection amount to constantly renewing one's self-portraits according to such vocabularies.

This vision of perfectionism is criticized as negative private liberalism by Shusterman. According to Shusterman's reading, it contradicts, in many aspects, its original vision conceived by John Dewey and others.[6] For example, Dewey never limited himself in the realm of language. He was active engaged in many public affairs. One of Deweyan ideals is democracy. "He sought the sort of social structure that enables individuals to flourish, not just for the sake of the individuals but for the group as well."[7]

Hilary Putnam shows another way to reconcile self-realization and democracy. Very briefly, Putnam's argument is deployed in this way: We indeed have no knowledge what human happiness is as a fixed end, and thus our choice of how to live is not predetermined by any known essence of human nature, function, or happiness; every individual's distinctive thinking with respect to the question of how to live could supply knowledge for enriching human choices and lives. As Putnam writes, "there can be no final answer to the question of how we should live, and therefore we should always leave it open to further discussion and experimentation."[8] According to Putnam, if one's discussion or experimentation is uniquely personal, can it benefit the question of How to Live. In Putnam's project, the individual's freedom to think about such matters does not hurt the common affairs of human beings, but rather contributes to the mutually shared questions of life. Perhaps this is, in Putnam's mind, the very quintessence of democracy.

However, as Shusterman rightly criticizes, "The value of thinking for oneself does not entail the value of thinking primarily about one's distinctive self. Dewey's worry remains: preoccupation with distinctive selfhood not only impoverishes the self but also deprives others of care and weakens the social bonds of democracy."[9] Moreover, knowledge about all possibilities of how to live is not as important to individual humans as Putnam conceives. Only one who takes responsibility for human affairs as a whole, such as the God or the United Nations, would be interested in this kind of knowledge.

I suggest that compared to Rorty and Putnam, Stanley Cavell offers more ingenious arguments for the reconciliation of self-cultivation and democracy, which may be narrated based on Shusterman's summary. First, the self is dynamic and not yet perfect, and is directed at self-improvement and (through this) at the improvement of society. Constantly in the making, the self should always strive towards a higher "unattained yet attainable self": "To recognize the unattainable self is … a step in attaining it," but the process of striving is never completed: not because we never reach the next or higher self, but because in reaching it, we should always see yet a further, still higher self to reach for. [10] Second, others that may be quite different from the self provide inspiring models for the further self, and so elicit deep respect. As Cavell writes, perfectionism means being:

Open to the further self, in oneself and in the other, which means holding oneself in knowledge of the need for change; which means, being one who lives in promise, as

a sign, or representative human, which in turn means expecting oneself to be, making oneself, intelligible as an inhabitant now also of a further realm …, call this the realm of the human – and to show oneself prepared to recognize others as belonging there.[11]

Shusterman's response to this idea is positive and he comments that, "Cavell's reconciliation of self-cultivation and democracy is very ingenious: self-absorbed perfectionism entails respect for others because they are implied in the self's unattained but attainable further self."[12]

But this innovative project is not exempt from challenge. Shusterman epecially criticizes Cavell's limitation of the tool of democratic self-perfection to the transformative activities of writing and reading. As Shusterman says,

Though Cavell's ethics of democracy is not reducible to a mere textual aestheticism, it leaves itself too vulnerable to such an interpretation through its extreme emphasis on writing and neglect of other important dimensions of democratic philosophical life. For isn't there more to knowing how to live than knowing how to write and read, even in the special, more demanding, perfectionist sense that Cavell gives these textual terms? If the philosophical life is really taken seriously – that is, with the full-blooded, more-than-verbal concreteness that life entails – we need to go not only beyond a fictive textual persona, but also beyond the ideal "city of words" and idealistic dimension of self-transformation that Cavell emphasizes. [13]

Furthermore, in my view, there is another point worth questioning: the ambition to expand the self into unlimited further selves. This pragmatist heroism or optimism is quite suspect. After all, based on the same insatiable will, Schopenhauer educes his pessimism which seems to be very contrary to the pragmatist heroism. I do not mean to suggest a preference for Schopenhauer's pessimism over pragmatist optimism. Instead, I propose to rescue pragmatist perfectionism with Confucianism.

While the above narrative may be brief, it suggests a starting point from which to contrast pragmatist and Confucian perfectionism. Despite the many differences among Rorty, Putnam, and Cavell, they share three common points in their visions of perfectionism: private or personal perfection, linguistic or textual work as the essential means or focus of perfection, and unlimited self-creation.

II

Before I investigate the possibilities of a convergence between pragmatism and Confucianism with regard to perfectionism, it should be acknowledged that other philosophers, such as Roger Ames and Richard Shusterman, have done excellent jobs bringing these two traditions into dialogue.[14] Shusterman confesses that when he is challenged by his Western philosophical colleagues for paying so much attention to the body, popular art, and practical value of art, he usually turns to find support from Asian philosophy, especially Confucianism. Like Asian Confucianism, American pragmatism originated outside of Europe, and Shusterman suggests that this contributes in part to their philosophical convergence.[15]

Indeed, the great pragmatist John Dewey highly appreciated Confucianism. The first dialogue between pragmatism and Confucianism can perhaps be traced to the early 20th century, when John Dewey initially mixed his pragmatism with Confucianism. Dewey's profound experience of living in China between 1919-1921 was confirmed by his daughter Jane, who said this experience "was so great as to act as a rebirth of [Dewey's] intellectual enthusiasms," and he henceforth held China as "the country nearest his heart after his own."[16] A.N. Whitehead also said in reference to his half-brother John Dewey: "If you want to understand Confucius, read John Dewey. And if you want to understand John Dewey, read Confucius."[17]

Beyond the particular historical instance of Dewey, we can see a number of similarities between pragmatism and Confucianism. In particular, both have the obvious philosophical inclination towards perfectionism. This tendency in Confucianism can be illustrated in a number of examples. Confucius frankly said of himself several times in the *Analects* that he was not a "Sage which meant his present state was not yet perfect. In addition, he admitted he was tireless in learning and in teaching other people, [18] which is to say that he constantly perfected not only his own but also other individual personalities. This self-perfection practiced by Confucius is almost the very example of Cavell's claim of democratic self-perfection. For Confucius, the process of self-perfecting did not reach its end in his lifetime. He said: "At fifteen my heart was set on learning; at thirty I stood firm; at forty I had no more doubts; at fifty I knew the mandate of heaven; at sixty my ear was obedient; at seventy I could follow my heart's desire without transgressing the norm." [19] Given that Confucius lived to be seventy-two years old, the state of "follow one's heart's desire without transgressing the norm" was the final in his process of self-perfection One can reasonably conceive that Confucius might have transformed again if he had lived to be eighty. It is worth emphasizing here that Confucian last perfecting state, that is, "follow the heart's desire without transgressing the norm", also seems to be the ideal of pragmatist perfectionism as it obviously softens the tension between private freedom and the social norm.

We can also find this description of different states of personality in *Mengzi* :

Haosheng Buhai asked, "What sort of man is Master Yue Zheng ?" Mengzi replied, "He is a good man, a real man." Haosheng Buhai asked, "What do you mean by 'A good man,' 'A real man?'" The reply was, "A man who commands our liking is what is called a good man. He whose goodness is part of himself is what is called real man. He whose goodness has been filled up is what is called beautiful man. He whose completed goodness is brightly displayed is what is called a great man. When this great man exercises a transforming influence, he is what is called a sage. When the sage is beyond our knowledge, he is what is called a spirit-man. Master Yue Zheng is between the two first characters, and below the four last." [20]

One's personality can be constantly developed without a certain, fixed end, which is an idea common to both Confucian and pragmatist perfectionism. Even Xunzi , a classical Confucian scholar who is very different from Mengzi in many aspects, shared

this concept. Although their ideas of human nature differ from each other, Mengzi and Xunzi similarly advocated perfectionism.

Mengzi is famous for his insistence on the goodness of human nature. But by saying that human nature is good, Mengzi merely means that all men possess the very beginnings (*duan*) of goodness, not that men's natures are already entirely good. The fulfillment of goodness comes from constant development and cultivation of the infantile good beginnings. If the nascent goodness is not developed fully, they will not lead to future goodness. .As Mengzi said:

The five kinds of grains are considered good plants, but if the grains are not ripe, they are worse than cockles. It is the same with regard to *ren* , which must grow into maturity. [21]

In its (human nature's) reality (*qing*), it is possible to be good. This is what I mean by saying that it is good. If men do what is not good, it is not the fault of their natural materials (*cai*). The feeling of commiseration belongs to all men; so does that of shame and dislike; that of reverence and respect; and that of right and wrong. The feeling of commiseration is human-heartedness; that of shame and dislike is righteousness; that of reverence and respect is propriety; and that of right and wrong is wisdom. They are not fused into us from without. We originally are possessed of them. They do not come from our reflection. Hence I say, "seek and you will find them; neglect and you will lose them. [22]

In short, what Mengzi sought to express in his doctrine that human nature is originally good is (1) everyone has the equal beginnings of goodness and is potentially capable of becoming Sages;[23] (2) everyone should develop her good beginnings to reach her entire and perfect goodness. [24]

Xunzi's doctrine of human nature is diametrically opposed to that of Mengzi. According to Xunzi, human nature is nothing but evil. Xunzi said: "The nature (*xing*) of man is evilÿhis goodness is only acquired training (*wei*)."[25] But although human nature is evil, it is possible for every man to become good. To the question "Can the man in the street become a *Yu* (a famous sage)?", Xunzi's response is:

What give *Yu* the qualities of *Yu* is that he put into practice human-heartedness (*ren*), righteousnessÿ*yi*, obedience to law (*fa*) , and uprightness (*zheng*). So then there is a possibility for knowing and practicing human-heartedness, righteousness, obedience to law and uprightness. This being so, every man on the street has the capacity for knowing human-heartedness, righteousness, obedience to law and uprightness, and the means to carry out these principles. Thus it is evident that he can become a *Yu*…. Suppose this man on the street directs his capacities to learning, concentrating his mind on one object, thinking and studying and investigating thoroughly, adding daily to his knowledge and long retaining it. If he accumulates goodness and does not stop, he will reach spiritual clairvoyance, and will form a trinity with Heaven and Earth. Thus the Sage is a man who has attained that state by cumulative effort.[26]

In short, the basic motive for Xunzi's insistence that "human nature is originally evil" is to maintain human striving against evilness and encourage transformation into goodness. Xunzi's argument against Mengzi's doctrine of "human nature is originally good" is: if one's nature has already been good, why would one continue to perfect oneself? But this is an obvious misreading of Mengzi. As just mentioned above, what Mengzi actually expresses in his doctrine of "human nature is good" is that all people posses the very beginnings (*duan*) of goodness, not that their natures are already entirely good. The achievement of goodness comes from constant development and cultivation of the infantile good beginnings. For Mengzi, if there are no such beginnings to goodness, then a philosophy such as Xunzi's must answer the question of where or how the goodness emerges. Nonetheless, while their presuppositions of human nature are contradictory, Mengzi and Xunzi's motives for cultivating oneself to pursue the goodness are almost the same.In fact, for Confucianism, the presupposition of human nature is not as important as the consequence derived from the presupposition. As Du Wei-ming writes,

the idea of human perfectibility does not specify whether environmental intervention or native endowment plays the key role in the perfecting process. Mencius (Mengzi) and Hsün Tzu (Xunzi), a sophisticated critic of the Mencian thesis, share this idea, but their reason for advocating it are significantly different. For Hsün Tzu, the perfecting process involves a complex interaction between the cognitive functions of the mind and social constraints….for Mencius, there is something in each human being that, in the ultimate sense, can never be subject to external control. This something is neither learned nor acquired; it is a given reality, endowed by Heaven as the defining characteristic of being human." [27]

However, for the purpose of this paper, their different motivations for advocating perfectionism is not as crucial as the fact that both Mengzi and Xunzi(the different schools of Confucianism) actually advocate perfectionism.

Confucian perfectionism is appropriately expressed in the Confucian perception of adulthood. According to Confucianism, adulthood or maturity is not only a particular state of human life but also an ideal which can never be achieved. As Du Wei-ming says,

The Confucian term for adulthood is *ch'eng-jen* (*chengren*), which literally means one who has *become* a person. Since the word *ch'eng* (*cheng*), like many other Chinese characters, is both a noun and a verb, the former signifying a state of completion and the latter a process of development, it is not far-fetched to understand the *ch'eng-jen* basically as one who has *gone far* towards a fully developed humanity. The notion of *ch'eng-jen* thus denotes not merely a stage of life but a many-sided manifestation of man's creative adaptation to the inevitable process of aging, a proven ability to mature further, as well as an obvious sign of maturity itself."[28] This constantly maturing further is quite similar to Cavell's constantly making a higher "unattained yet attainable self.

III

Continual self-perfection seems to be the common feature between Confucianism and pragmatism. But, in many aspects, these two perfectionisms are quite different.

First of all, Confucianism admits the finiteness of human individuals, and thus maintains that self-perfection should be based on the limits of finiteness. Given this humility, Confucianism advocates using rituals (*li* ®y) to restrict the unlimited ambition of individuals so that they can realize their real and illusionless self-perfection.[29] In the framework of *li*, everything can be called by its right name (*ming*

T), and individual self-perfection should be practiced under accordingly.

But in the pragmatist vision of perfectionism that we just outlined above, we cannot see any restrictions to the self's ambition. The self is totally free to open itself to an unlimited future. This unlimited freedom makes it impossible to practice self-perfection in the social community, and is perhaps the reason why some neo-pragmatists relegate the practices of self-perfection to the realm of language.

Pragmatists might object to Confucius' idea of *li* because it seems to rudely intervene in private freedom. But Confucianism would reasonably argue that human beings have actually grown up in the framework of *li*, as an already fundamental part of their lives, so perhaps only in the framework of *li* can they live comfortably, instead of feeling uneasy and controlled. Furthermore, since human beings cannot really live only in the realm of language, they must accept certain limitations so as to enjoy a real and embodied life in the community. As a case in point, in the highest state of Confucius' life — that is, following one's heart's desire without transgressing the norm — we indeed find that he enjoyed a great deal of freedom.

Furthermore, *li* cannot be conceived of as a fixed, or even dead system of rules and regulations. For Confucius, *li* is flexible and changeable,[30] and "varies according to the principle of 'timeliness'. The situational dimension is so crucial to the structure of *li* that a fundamentalistic adherence to its forms is at best a demonstration of what was called 'the small fidelity of common men and common women.'" [31]

For Confucius, *li* is not only changeable with situations, but also should be incarnated in human feelings and behaviors. In other words, *li* should be conceived as an externalization of authoritative conduct (*ren* ÁN). As Confucius said, "What has a person who is not authoritative (*ren* ÁN) got to do with observing ritual propriety (*li* ®y)? What has a person who is not authoritative got to do with the playing of music (*yue* j)?"[32] "In referring time and again to observing ritual propriety (*li* ®y), how could I just be talking about gifts of jade and silk? And in referring time and again to making music (*yue* j), how could I just be talking about bells and drums?"[33] For Confucius, *li* is not a fixed, empty form of human behaviors, but an embodiment of inner feelings. In this sense, perhaps we can interpret *li* as the art of dance. [34]

Second, Confucianism not only respects but also appreciates others. Although we can also find a respectful attitude towards others in the pragmatist vision of

perfectionism, especially in the case of Cavell, this respect is somehow a kind of conquest, —a stance quite different from the Confucian respect of appreciation. Allow me to make a comparison between the two.

In the vision of Cavell's perfectionism, respect to others derives from the fact that others are examples of the further self. In other words, others would be the targets of the self's conquest in the next step of self-perfection – that is, the self will transform herself into one of the others. The experiments of lifestyle supported by others merely manifest the possibilities for the self's further perfection. A perfect self seems to experience all of the possibilities of lifestyle manifested by all others. A perfect self should constantly give up the old self and acquire a new one. The other would be put away as soon as it has been experienced by the self. In this sense, the respect to others conceived by Cavell is not a real respect but a conquest or consumption. This critique, it seems, is also applicable to the Putnam's philosophy of perfectionism.

The vision of Confucian respect to others is quite different. Confucian *li* always implies the existence of an "other." As Du Wei-ming says, "To dwell in *li*, therefore, is not to remain isolated. On the contrary, it necessarily involves a relationship or a process by which a relationship comes into being. Thus, to relate oneself to an other is the underlying structure of *li*."[35] This respect to the others in the structure of *li* is not a conquest, because the self would not like to transform into others but "to harmonize his relationships with others."[36] The dichotomy of self and others, according to Du Wei-ming's interpretation, can be dissolved in the "dynamic process" of *li*:

If we seriously take the notion of *li* as movement, the dichotomy of self and society has to be understood in a new perspective. The self must be extended beyond its physical existence to attain its authenticity, for society is a constituent aspect of the authentic self. However, society is not conceived of as something out there that is being imposed on the individual. It is in essence an extended self. The internalization of social values, which is frequently criticized as the submission of the individual to a well-established authority, can therefore be interpreted as a creative step taken by the self to enter into human-relatedness for the sake of none other than its own realization.[37]

Du Wei-ming indeed articulates the deep relation between self and society in Confucianism. But in what sense society transforms into an extended self, or self transforms into an internalized society is still not very clear. In the case of Cavell, we also find this deep relation between self and society or others, but in a very different sense than Confucianism. For Confucianism, the self should not only "understand" how to respect others, but also "love" and even "enjoy" respecting others.[38] Thus Confucian respect to others can justifiably be called respect through appreciation, which is very different from Cavell's respect in conquest.

To articulate this in further detail, Confucianism surely admits that the self has many future possibilities. But the self also recognizes she can realize only one of these possibilities in a certain moment. What about the other possibilities? For Confucianism, if the self chooses one of her possibilities, the others will lose their chances to be

realized by the self at the same time. The other possibilities would then be the desired but unattainable further self. This desired but unattainable further self has lost its chance to be manifested by the self in this moment, but are there other chances for them to be realized? Of course they can be realized in the self's imagination, and in the self's life of reading and writing. However, the only way for them to be realized in the social community is by others. That is to say others may be regarded as the very realization of the self's desired but unattainable further selves, and in this there is a deep affinity between the self and others. Based on the recognition of their deep connections, others would not be potential materials for the further self, but rather the realization of the self's expectations or dreams; thus they become worthy of appreciating as a necessary complement of the self and raise a deep feeling of oneness with others. This is the Confucian vision of respect to others. As the *Analects* recorded:

Confucius said: "Shen! My teaching contains one all pervading principle." "Yes," replied Zengzi. When Confucius had left the room the disciples asked: "What did he mean?" Zengzi replied: "Our Master's teaching is conscientiousness (*zhong*) and altruism (*shu* U`), and nothing else.[39]

Feng Youlan takes two maxims of Confucius to interpret the meaning of *zhong* and *shu*: "In the maxim, 'Desiring to maintain oneself, one sustains others; desiring to develop oneself, one develops others,' there is the Confucian virtue of 'conscientiousness to others' or *zhong* . And in the maxim, 'Do not do to others what you do not like yourself,' there is the Confucian virtue of *shu* or altruism. Genuinely to practise these virtues of *zhong* and *shu* is genuinely to practise *ren*."[40] The virtues of *zhong* and *shu* form the basic attitude towards others for Confucius. The core of practicing *ren* or of practicing self-perfection is how to treat others. The Confucian strategy for realizing these central virtues is to limit the self and to keep space for others to perfect their own selves. Others can be appreciated as the real realization of the self's desirable and unattainable further possibilities.

Finally, one can still reasonably question this Confucian vision of perfectionism because there seems to remain few spaces for the processes of self-perfection. But according to Confucianism, there is actually space within society large enough for the self to perfect herself. We find some support to this point in the Confucian theory of the relation between name (*ming*T) and actuality (*shi*). The *Analects* says:

Zilu said, "If the Lord of left the government of Wei in your hands, what would you attend to first?" Confucius said, "It would have to be the correction of names *zhengming*

T ÿI should think." Zilu said, "Are you really so out of touch with things? Why would you correct names?" Confucius said, "How boorish you are, You In matters that he knows nothing about one would expect the gentleman to show some reserve. If names are not correct then speech loses its accord; if speech loses its accord the affairs are not brought to fruition; if affairs are not brought to fruition then ritual and music will not prosper; if ritual and music do not prosper then punishments and penalties

will be inappropriate; if punishments and penalties are inappropriate then the people will not know where to put hand and foot." [41]

When Duke Jing of Qi (JŸofIQ) inquired of Confucius the principles of government, Confucius answered, saying, "Let the ruler be ruler, the minister minister; let the father be father, and the son son." "Excellent!" said the Duke, "For truly if the ruler be not ruler, the minister not minister; if the father be not father, and the son not son, though grain exist, shall I be allowed to eat it?"[42]

What Confucius called the correction of names is to make the name accord with its actuality. As Feng Youlan interprets,

Every name possesses its own definition, which designates that which makes the thing to which the name is applied be that thing and no other. In other words, the name is that thing's essence or concept. What is pointed out by the definition of the name 'ruler,' for example, is that essence which makes a ruler a ruler. In the phrase: 'Let the ruler be ruler,' etc., the first word, 'ruler,' refers to ruler as a material actuality, while the second 'ruler' is the name and concept of the ideal ruler. Likewise for the other terms: minister, father and son. For if it is brought about that ruler, minister, father and son all act in real life in accordance with the definitions or concepts of these words, so that all carry out to the full their allotted duties, there will be no more disorder in the world.[43]

Feng Youlan's interpretation of the correction of names sounds clearly committed to essentialism, in that a name denotes a fixed essence of e.g. ruler, father, son, etc.[44]

But Confucius cannot be condemned as essentialist. First, according to Confucius, a name is not only defined by its essence, but also defined by its relation with other names. The meaning of the name of father is defined in its relation with the name of son. Second, although Confucius seems to admit a name has its fixed essence, he does not assume that an individual can have only one fixed name forever. Since one's actuality is changing along with the changing of her age and situation, her name should shift so as to accord with her different actuality. One can do her best to acquire new names, but on the other hand, one can also do her best to make her actuality accord with her name. There are two spaces for a person to perfect herself. One is to acquire as many names as possible, and the other is to make actuality accord with the name as fit as possible. Though the best way, according to Confucius, seems to make actuality accord with the name first, and to acquire a new name second.

To make a name accord with its actuality may appear easy, but is actually difficult for one to practice it in social life. Individuals should constantly cultivate and limit themselves in order to keep the accordance between name and actuality. When an individual reaches accordance with her name, it may be called small harmony. Every member then has his or her right name and is responsible for keeping this name in accord with actuality, which may be called the great harmony. In these harmonies, the self reaches her small and great perfections.

IV

I venture a claim that the accordance between name and actuality can be considered in terms of the accordance —borrowing the terminology from structuralist semiotics — of signifier and signified, or significance and presence.[45] Confucian perfectionism makes an effort to transform the signifier into signified, or to make significance into presence. In contrast, pragmatist perfectionism conceived by Rorty, Putnam, and Cavell strives to create signifier or significance as novel as possible, or to embrace signifier or significance as much as possible. This is an acute difference between Confucianism and pragmatism.

As discussed previously, in Rorty's vision of self-realization the search for "self-enlargement," "self-enrichment," and "self-creation," occur by the way of redescribing the self in new vocabularies. "The desire to enlarge oneself," says Rorty, "is the desire to embrace more and more possibilities, of constantly learning, of giving oneself over entirely to curiosity, to end by having envisaged all the possibilities of the past and of the future."[46] But again, this pursuit is limited to the realm of language. For Rorty, the self is nothing but a complex web of vocabularies and narratives. Rorty explicitly says: "human beings are simply incarnated vocabularies"; it is simply "words which…made us what we are."[47] This vision of aesthetic-ethical life which submits itself to the narrative of language bears the typical bias toward signifier or significance.

On the contrary, Confucius clearly prefers signified to signifier, or presence to significance. We find that Confucius usually criticized clever words (ç]Š) in the *Analects*.[48] We also find a case about Confucius recorded in the *Shiji* (òS‘Š) by Sima Qianÿ¤S¬™w• ÿwhich demonstrates the Confucian preference of presence to significance:

Confucius was once learning to play on ch'in (a string instrument) from the music master Hsiangtse, and did not seem to make much progress for ten days. The music master said to him, "You may well learn something else now," and Confucius replied, "I have already learned the melody, but have not learned the beat and rhythm yet." After some time, the music master said, "You have now learned the beat and rhythm, you must take the next step." "I have not yet learned the expression," said Confucius. After a while, the music master again said, "Now you have learned the expression, you must take the next step." And Confucius replied, "I have not yet got an image in my mind of the personality of the composer." After some time the music master said, "There's a man behind this music, who is occupied in deep reflection and who sometimes happily lifts up his head and looks far away, fixing his mind upon the eternal." "I've got it now," said Confucius. "He is a tall, dark man and his mind seems to be that of an empire builder. Can it be any other person than King Wen himself (the founder of the Chou Dynasty)?" The music master rose from his seat and bowed twice to Confucius and said, "It is the composition of King Wen." [49]

Confucius's search for self-perfection is thoroughly different from Rorty's pragmatist self-perfection as "self-enlargement," "self-enrichment," and "self-creation". The former can be called minimalism, and the later, in contrary, maximalism. Confucius

does not occupy as many as possible vocabularies or signs so as to create a novel self by redescribing it in the new language, in contrary, he occupies as few as possible vocabularies or signs so as to create a novel self by translating the significance into presence, or signifier into signified.

V

Richard Shusterman has articulated the differences between Rorty's pragmatism and Dewey's, and criticized the speciousness of an unlimited (and consequently shallow) quest for constantly new vocabularies.[50] In Shusterman's neo-pragmatism (or perhaps new generation of neopragmatism)[51] we find a philosophy that is both different from Rorty's and much closer to Dewey's ideas about pragmatism and Confucianism.

First, Shusterman does not limit his "art of life" to the realm of language, but offers a very strong recognition of presence in his support of both immediate experience as an experience of presence, and non-linguistic experience as an experience of presence without signs, signifiers, or representations. Shusterman suggests that there is non-linguistic understanding and experience beneath interpretation which is presumed to be linguistic:

Even if we grant that linguistic understanding is always and necessarily interpretation, it still would not follow that all understanding is interpretive. For that requires the further premise that all understanding and meaningful experience is indeed linguistic. And such a premise, though it be the deepest dogma of the linguistic turn in both analytic and continental philosophy, is neither self-evident nor immune to challenge. Certainly there seem to be forms of bodily awareness or understanding that are not linguistic in nature and that in fact defy adequate linguistic characterization, though they can be somehow referred to through language. As dancers, we understand the sense and rightness of a movement or posture proprioceptively, by feeling it in our spine and muscles, without translating it into conceptual linguistic terms. We can neither learn nor properly understand the movement simply by being talked through it.[52]

We can also find that Confucius approved of non-linguistic experience in the *Analects*. For example, in this dialogue between Confucius and his disciple Zigong, Confucius' expresses his general attitude to language:

Confucius said: "I wish I could avoid talking."

Zigong said, "Master, if you didn't speak, what would we disciples have to pass on?"

Confucius said, "Does Heaven speak? Yet the four seasons continue to change, and all things are born. Does Heaven speak?" [53]

Just as Wittgenstein did not want to be imitated by the "philosophical journalists," but rather sought to effect "a change in the way people live which would make all these questions superfluous," [54] Confucius does not like his disciples to record and circulate his words but to instead follow his life style so as to become exemplary people by themselves.

Second though Shusterman recognizes the value of the perfectionist strive for enrichment, he also advocates the beauty and value of the minimalist life as an existence that is both good and aesthetic. Shusterman criticizes Rorty's self-perfection as, "essentially romantic picaresque in genre, a tireless, insatiable, Faustian quest for enriching titillation through curiosity and novelty, a quest that is as wide-ranging as it is unstructured through the lack of center it so celebrates."[55] According to Shusterman's version of pragmatism, a "kind of slimmed-down, centered, limit-respecting life of unity" which is labeled by Rorty "the ascetic life" should be also a legitimate "aesthetic life".[56] He argues:

It is simply wrong to assume that a life emphasizing strong unity and thus adopting the limits this requires cannot be an aesthetic life, that it cannot be enjoyed and praised as aesthetically satisfying or even recommended for its aesthetic appeal. One could well choose the life of an earth-rooted, family-bound farmer over a jet-hopping, spouse-swapping academic simply in terms of its aesthetic joys of order, coherence, and harmony, which stem from a centrally structured and limited project of development, whose unity is both enhanced and largely constituted by cyclical and developmental variations on its central theme or narrative. As Foucault realized in his study of Greek ethics, one can pursue still greater simplicity and purity of life in order to stylize oneself as an extraordinary individual through a style of minimalist distinction where less becomes more since it is beyond the taste of the masses, but also because of the positive pleasures of self-limiting self-mastery. [57]

Third, Shusterman takes the finiteness of the self very seriously. In the last chapter of *Practicing Philosophy*, which may be read as his autobiography, Shusterman clearly demonstrates how the selves he has been and can possibly ever be are limited by his ethnic situation. Even if he leaves the Jewish community, he will always be in some way Jewish and thus certain "other selves" (an Irish Catholic, a Japanese Buddhist, etc.) are not genuine options for him [58] Shusterman also makes similar points about finitude in his account of genius in *Performing Live*. Genius should be developed according to one's already existing and limited self. Shusterman writes,

To bring one's light to catch the spark of style and make it blaze into genius, each person must reckon with her own color and thickness of lens, her own object and range of focus, her own title of terrain, her own azimuth toward the sun. Here is a task for both careful industry and dangerous abandon, for intently pushing on to the limit, and going still further by then letting go. But everyone must find – through trail, courage, honesty – her own proper, changing balance of these elements. And so we close with one last paradox: as with other alleged sublimities, the final formula for genius and style lies in the unformulable details of actual practice.[59]

Even when he advocates the use of the other to learn about the self, Shusterman emphasizes that there are limits to how much one can absorb of the other. He warns,

Self-expanding, self-testing encounters with the other are enriching but can be dangerously destabilizing. What seems easy and limitless in theory is often painfully stressful and incapacitating in practice, as we can learn from refugees who are forced

to settle in alien cultures. My conclusion is not to reject cultural travel but simply to recognize its risks and limits, so as to make it more fruitful…. We should seek cultural variety for enriching and defining the self but only to the extent that such variety can be held in a satisfying unity.[60]

In a recent paper Shusterman responds to Kathleen Higgins, who criticized the idea that there are limits to how much of the other we can absorb into the self. Shusterman writes,

There are practical limits as to how much such a subject can extend of herself in experience, even in the experience of reading. I say this to respond, in conclusion, to Higgins's worry that I emphasize the limits of expansiveness in urging multicultural exploration. In the abstract, of course, we can open ourselves to everything, and much academic gesturing to multiculturalism seems to be of this abstract, all-encompassing style that I find rather empty and naive, even when it is sincere. In practice, we cannot open ourselves to understand fully all others who see the world very differently than we do. This is not simply because we risk losing an effectively coherent web of beliefs that would cause us to lose rather than gain in effective identity. It is also because, practically speaking, we do not have enough time to launch ourselves in limitless transcultural exploration, without hindering the development of the cultural self that one is and without harming the people and communities that rely on us and make us what we are."[61]

Finally, Shusterman not only respects others to "help constitute our identity",[62] but also respects others for their own sake. Shusterman elaborates an aesthetic justification of democracy based on Dewey's pragmatism, and gives three arguments for the aesthetic justification of democracy. One of these arguments includes an appreciation of difference which is quite similar to the Confucian respect through appreciation introduced previously. One can develop "the aesthetic idea of personal experiential enrichment," Shusterman argues, "through democracy's respect for difference and the right of every individual to have and develop her distinctive perspective on life. Democracy's advocacy of the free and equal (though not always identical) participation of all different types of people in the direction of community life greatly enriches the experience of each. It not only provides the spice of variety, but gives the individual a heightened sense of her own distinct perspective and identity."[63]

The above-mentioned points should suffice to suggest the differences between Rorty's neo-pragmatism and Shusterman's new generation of neo-pragmatism. It seems clear that Shusterman tries to make neo-pragmatism much closer to classic pragmatism as elaborated by Dewey, and thus, whether intended or unintended, brings his version of pragmatism somehow close to Confucianism. Through Shusterman's pragmatist perspective, it may be possible to revive some old yet important Confucian ideas and make them appropriate for our time. From the Confucian perspective, it is easy to distinguish Shusterman's neo-neopragmatism from Rorty's neo-pragmatism which remains bound to the so-called linguistic turn of modern philosophy. In this new millennium and global era, a new convergence of American pragmatism and Asian Confucianism may be well worth considering.

Notes & Reference

1 I am greatly indebted to Richard Shusterman, Roger Ames, and Mei-Lin Chinn for helpful comments and suggestions.

2 Thamas Hurka, "Perfectionism," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, E.Craig ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), Vol. 7, p.299.

3 *Ibid*., p. 300.

4 Richard Shusterman, *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), especially chapter 2 and 3. The Chinese version translated by my students and I was published by Peking University Press (Beijing, 2002).

5 Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. xiv, 85.

6 See Richard Shusterman, *Practicing Philosophy*, pp. 67-87. Also see his *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, Second Edition (Lanham and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), pp. 246-261. The Chinese version of *Pragmatist Aesthetics* was published by The Commercial Press (Beijing, 2002), translated by myself.

7 Michael Eldridge, "John Dewey," in *The Dictionary of Modern American Philosophers*, John R. Shook ed. (Bristol: Thoemmes, 2005), Vol. 2, p. 634.

8 Hilary Putnam, *Renewing Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), p.189. Quoted by Richard Shusterman, *Practicing Philosophy*, p. 92.

9 See Richard Shusterman, *Practicing Philosophy*, p. 99.

10 See Stanly Cavell, *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emerson Perfectionism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990), p. 12. Also see Richard Shusterman, *Practicing Philosophy*, p. 101. Obviously, Cavell's version of perfectionism is explicitly based largely on Emerson more than on Dewey.

11 Stanly Cavell, *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emerson Perfectionism*, p. 125. Quated by Richard Shusterman, *Practicing Philosophy*, p. 103.

12 Richard Shusterman, *Practicing Philosophy*, p. 105.

13 *Ibid*., p. 108.

14 See Roger Ames, "Confucianism and Deweyan Pragmatism: A Dialogue", *Beida Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 5, April 2004, pp. 234-260. Richard Shusterman, "Pragmatist Aesthetics and East-Asian Thought," in *The Range of Pragmatism, Richard Shusterman* ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 13-42.

15 See Richard Shusterman, "Pragmatist Aesthetics and East-Asian Thought," p. 15.

16 Quoted by Richard Shusterman, "Pragmatist Aesthetics and East-Asian Thought," p.16.

17 Quoted by Roger Ames, "Confucianism and Deweyan Pragmatism: A Dialogue," p. 235.

18 For example, Confucius said: "I dare not claim to be a sage or a man of *ren* (ÁN). But I strive for these without being disappointed, and I teach without becoming weary. This is what can be said of me" (*Analects*,7:33).

19 *Analects*, 2:4.

20 *Mengzi*, 7B:28.

21 *Mengzi*, 6A: 19.

22 *Mengzi*, 6A: 6.

23 Cao Jiao asked Mengzi, "It is said, 'All men may be Yaos and Shuns' — is it so?" Mengzi replied, "It is" (*Ibid.*, 6B:2). Feng Youlan (¯QËSpQ) thinks that Mengzi especially stressed the liberty of the individual. He writes: "Mencius, … lays comparatively greater emphasis on individual liberty, for maintaining, as he did, that man is by nature good, he believed that human-heartedness, righteousness, propriety and wisdom are not 'fused into us from without. We originally are possessed of them.' Therefore it is inevitable that he should have strong respect for the moral decisions made by the individual." See Fung Yu-Lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1, second edition, trans. Berk Bodde (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1952), p. 127.

24 Feng Youlan (¯QËSpQ) makes an argument for this claim. He writes: "Yet why should man develop these beginnings of goodness? This is another question. Utilitarians would say that man should develop them because their development is beneficial to society, whereas their suppression is harmful. This is the reasoning used by Mo Tzu in his advocacy of universal love. Mencius, however, says that they should be developed because it is through them that man is human: 'That whereby man differs from the birds and beasts is but slight. The mass of people cast it away, whereas the Superior Man preserves it.'" See Fung Yu-Lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 122.

25 *Xunzi*, chapter 23.

26 *Ibid*., chapter 23.

27 Du Wei-ming, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1979), pp. 58-59.

28 *Ibid*., p. 40.

29 Speaking about the origin of *li*, Xunzi said, "Whence do *li* arise? The answer is that man is born with desires. When these desires are not satisfied, he cannot remain without seeking their satisfaction. When this seeking for satisfaction is without measure or limit, there can only be contention. When there is contention, there will be disorder. When there is disorder, everything will be finished. The early kings hated this disorder, and so they established *li* and *yi* (righteousness, ©n), to set an end to this confusion."*Xunzi*, ch. 19.[30] Confucius said, "The use of a hemp cap is prescribed in the observance of ritual propriety (*li*®y). Nowadays, that a silk cap is used instead is a matter of frugality. I would follow accepted practice on this. A subject kowtowing on entering the hall is prescribed in the observance of ritual propriety (*li*®y). Nowadays that one kowtows only after ascending the hall is a matter of hubris. Although it goes contrary to accepted practice, I still kowtow on entering the hall."*Analects*, 9:3, see Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemontm Jr., *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine, 1998), p. 126. Confucius' attitude towards *li* is changeable with the change of situation.

31 Du Wei-ming, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought*, p.30.

32 *Analects*, 3:3, see *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation*, p.82.

33 *Analects*, 17:9, see *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation*, p. 206.

34 According to Feng Youlan's interpretation, the Confucian *li* are transformed into poetry. Feng Youlan says: "There is a difference between what we know and what we hope. Knowledge is important, but we cannot live with knowledge only. We need emotional satisfaction as well. In determining our attitude towards the dead, we have to take both aspects into consideration. As interpreted by the Confucianists, the mourning and sacrificial rites did precisely this…these rites were originally not without superstition and mythology. But with the interpretations of the Confucianists, these aspects were purged. The religious elements in them were transformed into poetry, so that they were no longer religious, but simply peotic." See Fung Yu-lan (Feng Youlan), *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, edited by Derk Bodde (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 148.

[35] Du Wei-ming, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought*, p.30.
[36] *Ibid*., p. 20.
[37] *Ibid*., p. 25.
[38] Confucius said, "To truly love it is better than just to understand it, and to enjoy it is better than simply to love it."*Analects*, 6.20.
[39] *Analects*, 4: 15.
[40] Fung Yu-Lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 71.
[41] *Analects*, 13:3.
[42] *Ibid*., 12:11.
[43] Fung Yu-Lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 60. For another interpretation of the correction of names in detail, see John Makeham, *Name and Actuality in Early Chinese Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 35-50.
[44] Thank Richard Shusterman for noting Feng Youlan's essentialist inclination in his interpretation of the Confucian correction of names.
[45] For an initial "structure-biased" research of Chinese philosophy, see Hans-Goreg M öller, "Before and After Representation," *Semiotica*, Vol. 143 (2003). Also see his Chinese paper, "Feng Youlan's New Lixue and the location of New Confucianism," *Research of Philosophy*, vol. 2, 1999.
[46] Richard Rorty, "Freud and Moral Reflection," in J. H. Smith and W. Kerrigan (eds), *Pragmatism's Freud: The Moral Disposition of Psychoanalysis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 11.[47] Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, pp. 88, 117.
[48] Confucius said: "Someone who is a clever speaker and maintains a 'too-smiley' face is seldom considered a person of *jen*"(*Analects* 1:3); Confucius said: "Clever words, a pretentious face and too-perfect courtesy: Zuo Qiu-Ming was ashamed of them. I am also ashamed of them. Concealing one's resentments and acting friendly to people: Zuo Qiu-Ming was ashamed to act this way and so am I"(*Ibid*., 5:24); "Clever words disrupt virtue"(*Ibid*., 15:26). In contrary, Confucius warned his disciplines that they should be "cautionary in speaking" (*Ibid*., 13:27); diligent in their work and careful in speech"(*Ibid*., 1:14); and "hesitant in speech"(*Ibid*., 4:24).
[49] Quoted from *Wisdom of Confucius*, Edited and translated with notes by Lin Yutang (New York: Random House, 1938), pp. 74-75.
[50] See Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, ch. 9; *Practicing Philosophy*, ch. 2.
[51] As Casey Haskins calls Shusterman "perhaps post-postmodern", we can call him perhaps new generation of neopragmatist, in order to show the difference between Shusterman's version of pragmatism and Rorty's. See Casey Haskins, "Enlivened Bodies, Authenticity, and Romanticism", in "Symposium: On Richard Shusterman's *Performing Live*", *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 36, No. 4, Winter 2002, p.93.
[52] See Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, p. 127.
[53] *Analects*, 17:18.
[54] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), p. 61.
[55] Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics*, p. 248.
[56] *Ibid*., p. 252.
[57] *Ibid*., p. 252.
[58] Richard Shusterman, *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life*, pp.179-196.
[59] Richard Shusterman, *Performing Live: Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), p. 217. Shusterman writes, "One must build on one's already existing self – its talents, potential, most promising inclinations, but one must not rest content with them. One can only get to one's higher self through the starting point of one's present self. If one has no real talent for music but only for mathematics, one should seek one's higher self not as a musician but as a mathematician."*Ibid*., p. 214.
[60] *Ibid*., p. 196.
[61] Richard Shusterman, "Home Alone? Self and Other in Somaesthetics and *Performing Live*," in "Symposium: On Richard Shusterman's *Performing Live*", *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 36, No. 4, Winter 2002, p.113.
[62] Shusterman writes, "Authenti city's 'goals of self-fulfillment and self-realization' require more than the individual's own resources. For the self is essentially social and dialogical in character, constructed from our interaction with other selves, who give us a sense of our own qualities, roles, limits, and worth. Even the meaning of our most private thoughts derives from a language that depends on, and is acquired through, dialogue with others. So if we fail to gain the recognition of others for what we are, our own sense of self is somehow diminished and impaired. These others who help constitute our identity and whose recognition is crucial for our own self-affirmation include not only those intimates whom we care most about, those 'significant others' (in George Herbert Mead's phrase) who introduce us to our values and set our models, expectations, and horizons for self-realization." Richard Shusterman, *Performing Live*, pp. 187-188.
[63] Richard Shusterman, *Practicing Philosophy*, p. 97.

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Machado's *The Alienist :* A Celebration of Hidden Irony

A short survey of the historical context of Machado's *The Alienist* (1882)

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It is not altogether easy to understand the subtleties of Machado's ironic twists – more so for a reader unacquainted with the social particularities of Brazilian society in the 19th century and the social progress of the Second Empire under Dom Pedro II. The indeterminate setting of the story disorients even the experienced Brazilian reader: Simão Bacamarte is vaguely presented as a favorite of the King of Portugal, which points to the Colonial period in the 18th century, but there are other characteristics which make him a typical figure of the Second Empire (Dom Pedro II's reign, beginning in the second quarter of the 19th century). These confusing temporalities are probably deliberate and make the social criticism less evident.

A brief historical survey may help the understanding. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Portuguese colonizers were established in vast rural properties dominated by almost feudal sovereigns. The Portuguese Crown had great difficulty in controlling their autocratic rule and in collecting taxes. During that period, the Casa Grande, the fortress-manor was the center of economic, social and political decisions, providing at the once the school and the tribunal, the church and the hospital - and the asylum. The 'democratic' tendencies of these oligarchs and patriarchs concerned mainly their autocratic domination over those autarchies.

Occasional bouts of abusive taxation brought about occasional revolts, like the ones in Vila Rica (1722) or Tiradentes. Behind the seemingly popular upheavals one may discover the interests of the traditional aristocratic magnates, camouflaged behind the figure of a popular demagogue (Felipe dos Santos – finally betrayed when the conflict turned out to be more serious).

During the 18th century, plebeian merchants with entrepreneurial talent started competing with the old aristocracy and disputed the exclusive power of the privileged families over the City Assemblies and Senates. Despised by the old aristocracy, they mimiced their life style in the elaborate *sobrados* of the modern, urban society[1]. The arrival of the Portuguese Court during the Napoleonic Wars, then the 1st and the 2nd Empire (Dom Pedro I and II,) saw the first effort of centralization and organization of a nation-state. These reforms put an end to unrestricted patriarchal sovereignty. The discovery of great mineral resources dislocated economic wealth from agriculture (sugar, coffee) towards mining. A new and more violent system of tax collecting often crushed agricultural wealth. Eventually, patriarchal prestige faded under heavy mortgages and an ever more expensive (prohibited, yet tolerated) slave trade.

Machado's story *The Alienist* draws its ironic effects from these reforms situated between 1845 and the 1880s (the recognition of the Bill Aberdeen, the 1871 Law freeing newborn children of slaves (Lei do Ventre livre) and 1883 Confederação Abolicionista), during which the so-called Liberals (mainly the big landowners defending their 'democratic' privileges) were fighting Imperial efforts for abolition, economic and political reforms. Dom Pedro II, the emblematic educator of the unified Nation, attracted the sons, nephews and *agregados* (tenants) of the aristocratic patriarchs and created clear links between government service and the education of the '*bachareis'* (academics). Some of these become prominent figures and faithful allies of the Emperor's well-meaning efforts (Joaquim Nabuco is a good example; Machado modulates this perfect model in a satirical manner, twisting it into the quixotesque figure Simão Bacamarte). A large number of those *bachareis*, however, reproduced the traditional habits of favor while occupying the Chamber and the Senate, the National Guard and the rest of the administrational posts. As legislators and judges, they showed much reluctance against abolishing definitively their parents' and relatives' economic basis (production based on slave labor). The *chassée croisée* of conflicting and contradictory interests makes it easy to understand why a real public discussion about liberty and emancipation, equality and responsibility was postponed for almost 40 years (1883 Joaquim Nabuco's *O Abolicionismo*).

During the entire 19th century, popular revolts took on a different profile but continued to be the playground of demagogy. The most contingent circumstances sometimes stirred revolutionary upheavals under the guidance of short-lived demagogues: health innovations or the introduction of a new measuring system could lead to bloody riots. The names and presentation of the riots in Machado's *The Alienist* remind the Brazilian reader of the endless riots of this period (for example, the *Quebra-Quilo*)[2]. The appendix at the end of this essay highlights the relevant historical events and some of the word-plays and puns, which are necessary for the understanding of *The Alienist.*

I. Machado's multiple ironies

Machado is a universally appreciated author, because he offers his reader delightfully easy entertainment on the surface and thick layers of scholarship and sophistication underneath. His irony is explosive and contagious, but the journalist Machado is an expert in blurring the real goals of his sarcastic blows, mixing up his reader's attention and making it practically impossible to follow the thread of his critical intentions. In theory, the reader is not only free, but he is invited to pay attention;

but Machado's baroque and dispersive wit makes the task of serious-and-witty interpretation difficult. Machado is perfectly conscious of this and builds meta-ironic allusions (concerning the reader's superficiality and lack of education or perspicacity) into his stories.

The Alienist, one of the first of his 'mature' works, is a good example of cryptic social and political criticism which remains covered under an over-simple (if not simplistic) plot. Simon Bacamarte, the alienist, is an increasingly monomaniac psychiatrist who tries to establish a positivistic system and research unit in an imaginary town called Itaguaí. Proceeding systematically, he needs to segregate the mad population from the sane and normal one and proceed to scientifically adequate treatment. The ever increasing population locked up in his asylum, Casa Verde, makes him realize, however, that his theory contradicts statistical notions of normality. After a tentative adaptation (he inverts the first hypothesis) of his thesis, he liberates the inmates and locks himself up, dying shortly after.

The surface bait about false madness and normality has been the delight of Foucault's epigones, and Marxist critics have not lost sight of the quite obvious hints to the typical Brazilian power structures:

"[Bacamarte has the] status of a nobleman who enjoys royal favor, which transforms him into a dictator of poor Itaguaí. The town's population suffers the effects of his terrorism of prestige, of which the relations between the physician and the patient, the psychiatrist and the madman, are merely particular cases". The exercise of power becomes therefore, the axis of the story before the narrative turns to fanciful ideas of a steely-eyed scientist… […]

There is then a preexisting state of authority that bends the tongue and the spine of those who surround Bacamarte. This authority is exercised in the name of an activity considered to be neutral, 'above common appetites': science and the love of truth that inspires the psychiatrist." [3]

Bosi's critique highlights a social and political problem of Brazilian sociability, very well known since Roberto Schwartz's analyses of Machado's work. In the case of the *Alienist*, however, this approach falls short of a decisive particularity of the emblematic features of the novel's main character: Simon Bacamarte is a fictional construction which over-determines the power-typology of the dictator. Bosi and his fellow Marxist interpreters) emphasize the oppressive control tendencies of the patriarchal characters and their pseudo-democratic offspring (the capitalist, liberal and bourgeois etc.), but they ignore the complex ambiguities of certain of these figures during the Second Empire. Between 1845 and 1883[4] Dom Pedro II, the emblematic educator of the unified Nation, attracted the sons, nephews and *agregados* (tenants) of the aristocratic patriarchs, canalizing the education of the '*bachareis'* (academics) who occupied the Chamber and the Senate, the National Guard and the rest of the administrational posts. Among them, we find a fair number of sincerely committed and generous reformers, whose efforts and ideas (although sometimes misplaced and

sometimes almost ridiculous) deserve moral admiration. Bacamarte has similarities with these slightly quixotesque characters. Ironic overtones are reminiscent much more of Swift's keen-and-blind philosopher or of Flaubert's Bouvard et Pécuchet than of a power-thirsty tyrant.

Of course Simao Bacamarte is a scientist and apparently represents modern scientific health systems (the clinics of the famous psychiatrists – Pinel, Charcot – whose fame immortalized hospitals like the Salpétrière in Paris). Of course he is an aristocrat and precisely the type of Dom Pedro's 'chosen' men[5]: a *Bacharel* (Bachelor of Arts) imbued with a grand task, sincere and committed, and yet… a bit obtuse, he takes good intentions to a poor end. There are no pejorative connotations of abusive kingly favor: he rather resembles the grave and altruistic reformers the Emperor recruited among the sons of the old oligarchy: his integrity, patriotism and rigorous responsibility contrast with the emotional superficiality of ambitious demagogues who lead a disorientated and reluctant population into an unnecessary bloodbath[6]. The bloodbath brought about by Porfírio the barber is an unnecessary waste in several respects: 1) because Simao Bacamarte turns out not to have malignant intentions, 2) because the self-appointed 'liberator' does not liberate the interns of the asylum; 3) because revolution and bloodshed are negligently brought about and forgotten by Porfírio in order to… confirm the very same status quo: the only 'change' is a slight variation of the top of the pyramid: instead of the previous City Assembly, Porfirio proposes an 'alliance' of himself plus Simao Bacamarte, plus a selection of the previous City Assembly…

But there are still other ironic allusions in the condensed fictional construction of Machado's main character: Simao Bacamarte is also the laic and anti-clerical scientist, who flares Padre Lopes' Jesuitical intrigues and prefers cold science to cordial Catholicism. And, last but not least, he is weird and alien, because (coming back from Europe) he tries to be a man with public interests as opposed to the normal Brazilians – like his wife Dona Evarista or his agregado, Crispim Soares, whose horizons are limited to domestic, private, family-welfare.

As announced by the emblematic name (old gun), Bacamarte is not far from the Swiftian 'bookish' philosopher – a quixotesque caricature of the modern scientist, who cannot adapt his knowledge to the particular situation he finds in Brazil. Muricy's reading pinpoints this element when developing her idea about the well-known flaws of 'imported ideas' and their fallacious use in an inadequate context. Muricy thinks that Bacamarte is an allegory of 19th century Brazilian culture which indulged in an abusive importation and pernicious exploration of European models: she suspects Bacamarte of a power-plot, aiming at an alliance between science and power[7]. It might be more important, however, to note that Simao Bacamarte resembles common caricatures of Dom Pedro, who was caricaturized as a bookish Don Quixote of Education and Science. The mainly inglorious battle against ignorance waged by Dom Pedro II, who recruited (the elected 1.000 – according to O. Vianna) among the sons

of the oligarchy, appears in a passage from G. Freyre's essay "Brazil…" (less idealizing than O. Vianna):

But while there were graduates of European universities who reconciled their knowledge of European theories with political or social realism, others exaggerated pure theory or doctrine. They were simply theoretical or merely bookish,. (Brazil, p.5)

Against the generalizing critique of power-abuse which focuses the 'bourgeois' or the aristocratic villain, let us see Bacamarte through the lens of Dom Pedro's reform policies: Machado does not represent Bacamarte receiving favors, but putting his personal wealth to collective and scientific use. He spends his own money to build Casa Verde – another reminder of the Imperial effort to introduce reforms in the health and sanitary system which would bring belated Itaguaí-Brazil closer to Western Civilization. This is clearly an allusion to the generous patriotic commitment which Machado may have admired[8] in figures like the physicians Barão Torres Homem or Correia de Azevedo, Saldanha Marinho and Oswaldo Cruz, Joaquim Nabuco, Barão do Rio Branco…[9].

All this (quixotesque) commitment, of course, does not make him a good scientist. Although trained in the European schools of positivism and admired by the King of Portugal, he proudly withdraws into the 'splendid isolation' of the provincial realm of Itaguaí. The remote tropical setting transforms him into the Brazilian version of a Shandyan hobby-horse scientist (together with overtones of Swift's philosopher and Flaubert's Bouvard et Pécuchet). But he serves his country with great integrity… like Dom Pedro II!

The (more benevolent) focus of irony concerns Simao Bacamarte's resemblance to the dignified, enlightened and committed individuals of the Imperial aristocracy – men who, like Nabuco and Rio Branco made every effort to bring about changes in the backward semi-feudal régime of the Second Empire. Under Dom Pedro's influence, they tried to reform the country morally and economically[10], to found new institutions and to unify and centralize the fragmented and highly individualistic 'democratic' realm. Ironically, though, their reforms were equally individualistic and sometimes dictatorial enterprises, facing the general difficulty of the slave system: conceiving innovations but avoiding the hard work of implementing them. Even if their horizons were broader than those of their peers, they were prone to leisure and bureaucratic *sine curas*, and a certain preference for honorific and contemplative activities flawed their enterprises.

II. Machado's focus of social critique

Bacamarte's logic of hospitalization (and his vision of responsible judgment)

Instead of exaggerating the focus of power abuse, we might see the finer irony of Machado's psychiatrist, who may be obtuse, but nevertheless identifies certain socially determined follies: cordiality, for example, a hyperbolic and characteristically Brazilian rhetoric which covers up a deplorable lack of sincerity and outspokenness. Bacamarte

also exposes a good list of failings in his neighbors: almost instinctive plotting and intrigue (Pe. Lopes); nouveau-riche dishonesty, greed and ostentation (the saddle-maker); decadent aristocratic money-wasting (Costa); flattery and opportunism (Crispim Soares); administrative incompetence, ignorance and void oratory (the City Assembly); and, most of all, revolutionary demagogy and its *pendant:* the passive lack of civic responsibility of the emotionally manipulated crowd (Porfírio, Pina and the three-hundred).

In other words, Simao Bacamarte is not just the figure of villainous power abuse. Like Don Quixote's idealistic heroism in a trivial world, Bacamarte is an old and useless gun in the swamp of Itaguaí. He is the center and the top (privileged observer) of a social structure. This hierarchic and patriarchal pyramid has made domination smooth and automatic – it does not need violent repression any more, but is already psychologically internalized and functions – so to speak – down-side-up! Machado satirizes the Brazilian version of the *servitude semi-volontaire* (La Boétie) highlighting several times the almost chivalric gestures of Simao Bacamarte, who offers his arm while gently and courteously guiding his fools into Casa Verde! Towards him converge the submissive gestures of the *agregados*, the intrigues of the ecclesiastic (who fears any kind of economic or scientific innovation), the ignorant disorientation of the city institutions and the emotional waves and upheavals of family members. All the minor figures of the story – Crispim Soares, Dona Evarista, Padre Lopez, etc. – are engaged in weaving around Simao Bacamarte gestures of insincerity, words of flattery, tactics of intrigue. Machado is the first to pinpoint the whole range of apparently docile dissimulation called "cordiality"[11] – the characteristically unstable warmth-and-violence bred by the system of patriarchal favor. Silence, flattery and elaborate void rhetoric suck up any possibility of expressing sincere feelings and frankly outspoken thoughts. This kind of duplicity, which we know of course in other cultural contexts – think of Henry James' Mme. Merle -, is not limited to a distinct social layer (the Court, for example). What appears in other novels as the partial perversion of moral behavior (high society intrigue), crosses in Machado's universe all strata of society, from top to bottom: in other words, perversion is normal! It 'comes naturally' in a society overshadowed by the "loyalty complex" towards the *Senhor da terra* and the "respect-complex" towards the *Senhor do engenho*[12]. This instinctive respect and automatic loyalty (which produces blind, instinctive obedience in the citizens' relationship towards the various representatives of power: tenants and capangas, administrators and agregados) flaws the entire basis of civic responsibility and freedom.

This is what Simao Bacamarte obtusely perceives when he returns to his own country at the beginning of the story. Coming from Europe (Padova and Coimbra), he notices despite all his shortcomings the socially induced flaws and follies which block progress in Itaguaí: ecclesiastical intrigue, manipulation and menace (reference to the recent shocks between the Bishop of Olinda and the Imperial State – cf. the major events at the end of this article); the notorious mismanagement of the City Assembly (abusive tax system leaving no margin whatsoever for new investments); the

incompetence of the accountant in calculating the future revenues of a new tax created in order to sustain the asylum voted under the irresistible influence of Simao Bacamarte, he finances the vast and well equipped Casa Verde from his own pocket. ("Simão Bacamarte arranja tudo", chap. 1). But then of course, having convinced a totally incompetent and ignorant Assembly to vote the new institution, he reigns over Casa Verde and the City of Itaguaí like an autocratic sovereign…

The joke is not that he mistakes normal people for madmen, but that his positivistic convictions and hypotheses lead him to identify as "madness" what must have appeared to Machado as the **real Brazilian madness and waste:** the irrational vices produced by the swamp of insincere social relationships: flattery, grandiloquence, irresponsible aristocratic generosity (Costa's irresponsibility in chapter V appears to be a consequence of guilt feelings for the violence involved in slave-owning and the wrath of his ancestor, tio Salomão[13] against a beggar), deceit and corruption (wordplay "alabardeiro" means saddle maker and cheater), etc.. Here again, the condensation of the wordplay allows for another over-determination: it is quite inexplicable how a poor saddle-maker can become so rich that he can build a palace furnished with precious pieces from Hungary and Holland. Getting rich with such a poor and old-fashioned activity in a time when Mauá meant to construct a transcontinental railway, can only mean that cheating in the traditional (exploitational) fashion is more lucrative than responsible economic and social innovation!

The psychiatrist's "two most beautiful cases" of madness, however, appear in chapter IX. Porfírio having overthrown the City Dragons and taken the Assembly, declares that – far from realizing the promised task (destroy the Casa Verde) – he now is all too proud carrying "the responsibility of government inherited from the City Assembly". With inflated solemnity, he declares his vocation to "protect the public institutions" and invites Simao Bacamarte to "unite, and the crowd will know how to obey". Bacamarte – far from dreaming with power, pursues his scientific hobby-horse, keenly observing the demagogue's folly and asking (negligently, the way one would interrogate a real lunatic) how many dead and injured his rebellion had produced – 11 dead and 25 injured is the answer, without any concern for this somber responsibility! Nor does the cheering crowd seem to care much about the bloody outcome – which is the hidden meaning of Bacamarte's musing and Machado's sarcastic subtitle "Two lovely cases"! For the normally distracted reader, it is not quite obvious what Machado means with the title "Two lovely cases". Only a critical second reading brings out the meaning pointing to the totally irresponsible joint madness of the demagogue and the crowd. Machado certainly has in mind the pseudo-popular movements triggered by petty ambitions fostered within the authoritarian clans. Porfírio is the typical example of the (probably mestize) agregado, whose plebeian strife to equal his former master brings out his talent of the demagogue and the self-appointed liberator![14] His feelings for the community he is leading, however, show a somehow reactive and twisted solidarity[15] and makes the community an instrument of his ambitions. Porfírio emblematically repeats the private appropriation of the city government and alliance-

policies of the traditional families after working his fellow-citizens into inconsistent revolutionary outbreaks.

The name of Porfírio's revolution – Canjica – reminds the many revolts Dom Pedro II had to face throughout his reign (Balaiada, O Quebra-Quilo, etc.). The two beautiful cases which Simao Bacamarte watches from his veranda mean, of course the joint follies of inconsistent populist leaders and the obedient-and-hysterical reactions of the manipulated masses towards their ephemeral and inconsistent "leaders". Speedily, as in historical caudilho-stories, Porfirio will fall under the next coup of another barber – Pina. Over-satisfied with his alliance with Simao Bacamarte, he neglects to react against the seizure of 50 of his followers who are duly shut up in Casa Verde; and he will follow them there, in the company of many others, including a deputy and the president of the Assembly- all of them dutifully turned over by the obedient new governor.

Machado criticizes the terrible inconsistency of political responsibility in a system without any real liberty of decision-making concerning social and economical, ethical and political matters. There is no critique of science as such (whichever model Simao Bacamarte may have adopted) but about short-sighted, individualistic abuses of science, knowledge and leadership.

III. The triple reversal and the absurdity of Brazilian political representation

This brings us back to Simao Bacamarte and the triple reversal of his 'scientific' enterprise.

1. Based on a supposedly scientific hypothesis, he identifies and segregates the 'mad' people from the normal (madness = social vices)
2. Casa Verde being overcrowded and the city almost empty, statistics show that the claim of 'normality' has falsified the hypothesis: if vice = normal, the perfect and virtuous must be the madmen: they are now identified and hospitalized: ironically, their number is only 18! And they are dutifully cured by inoculation of vicious and corrupt behavior
3. Then Simao Bacamarte suspects that he himself must be "mad", consults the Assembly and, when they confirm his goodness and perfection, he locks himself up and dies in the Casa Verde.

Simao Bacamarte's honest, sincere and well-meaning madness highlights the typical and structural flaws of the Second Empire: the lack of civic judgment, the absence of common sense and moral determination. Contrary to what previous critics say about him, Simao Bacamarte should not be suspected of planning "the reciprocal alliance between the emerging discipline and the political power."[16] Machado points out several times that the asylum Casa Verde was financed by Bacamarte's own money, and that the alienist turns down the allocations guaranteed by the City Assembly when he finds out that his theory of madness has been falsified by the statistics. His honesty is confirmed by another gesture: he spontaneously reimburses the payments made to

the families for the now-released patients[17]. So there is no control-mania *à la* Foucault working in Machado's ironic mind.

It is more likely that Machado ironically pinpoints scientific amateurism and individualistic idiosyncrasies. Consider how Simao Bacamarte treats madness, not as a deviant island, but as a continent as if the world were a **nau dos loucos**: Socrates, Pascal and Mahomet figure in the same list of madmen as Caracala, Caligula and Domitian! Trained by positivists and modern, enlightened minds like Renan, Bacamarte drives subtle enlightenment too far and gets lost in monkish generalizations. Like Bouvard and Pécuchet, he is only partly aware of the world and guides his observations too much from bookish knowledge (another typical error of Brazilian scientific and literary culture in the 19th century). Seemingly unaware of the general flaw of his country, he crowds Casa Verde with inmates and empties the City.

Let us end with a final remark about satirical treatment of political representation in Chapter VI, which narrates the popular upheaval against Simao Bacamarte's supposed tyranny. Significantly, nobody in the crowd is able to distinguish what the psychiatrist really has in mind. The total unawareness of the (modern) procedures of empirical science maintains the people of Itaguaí within the bonds of domestic fantasies: they suspect motives like vengeance, jealousy or greed. Some believe that the psychiatrist is himself mad. Unable to judge and too passive to decide and act, they slide into the typical Brazilian habit of hiding their opinions, waiting for a charismatic figure to set their resentments and irrational passions in motion. Of course this man of action comes from within the intimate circle of the oligarchic administration. Simao Bacamarte's second hand, Porfírio the barber, incites the rage of a handful of citizens and whips up the Assembly to dispossess Simao Bacamarte and destroy Casa Verde. There is a satirical touch in the President's protest, when he claims that "Casa Verde is a public institution" and more so, a public institution that cannot be affected by administrative decisions or (even less so) by popular movements [18]. The President is right. Just like the Assembly he presides over, Casa Verde is a public institution, but both seem to owe their existence and activity (like most of the "public" institutions of that period) to the personal interest and private money of oligarchs like Bacamarte. The confused and paradoxical relations of the private and the public sphere mirror Brazilian reality of the 19th century. The reader can guess Machado's hidden nostalgia for men like Bacamarte, whose integrity contrasts with Porphirio's authoritarian and intuitive manipulation of the crowd[19].

Notes and References

1 Cf. G. Freyre, *Sobrados e Mucambos*, Rio de Janeiro, José Olympio, 1961, vol. I, chap. I; O. Vianna, *Instituições políticas brasileiras*, Rio de Janeiro, José Olympio, 1955, analyzes the fatal, clanic tradition of flawed political representation due to the private appropriation of public power : city assemblies founded by the land-owners who have their tenants and relatives elected under the pressure of jagunços and capangas. Competing plebeians continue the same power-struggle acting as self-appointed popular leaders. Bacamarte and Porfírio in Machado's story can be seen as figures of the respective social classes.

2 Revolta Cabanagem

– Pará; 1837 Sabinada

– Bahia; 1842 Revolução dos liberais

– SP e em Minas; ; 1848 Revolução Praieira

– Pernambuco; Revolução Faroupilha

– RS; 1874 O Quebra Quilos

– movimento sedicioso Pernambuco; Prisão e condenação dos bispos de Olinda e Pará;

3 Cf. Alfredo Bosi, "A máscara e a fenda", *Machado de Assis. O Enigma do Olhar.* São Paulo, Atica, 1999, p. 88.

4 1845 is the date of the Recognition of the Bill Aberdeen, in 1871, the Law freeing newborn children of slaves (Lei do Ventre livre) is issued and in 1883 takes place the Confederação Abolicionista: the so-called Liberals (mainly the big landowners defending their 'democratic' privileges) are fighting the Imperial efforts of abolition, economic and political reforms.

5 Cf. Oliveira Vianna's chapter on "O carisma imperial e a seleção dos 'homens de mil'", *Instituições Políticas Brasileiras, vol. I*, José Olympio, 1955, cap. XIV, 379 ss..

6 This 'remanejamento' is of course a cruel allusion to the falsely 'liberal' and caricatural 'democratic' intrigues of against Dom Pedro's efforts of centralization; To understand Machado's irony, it is better to refrain from Marxist and Foucaldian projections and to read Oliveira Vianna's (idealizing) account of Brazilian Political Institutions…. – which Machado would have adhered to!

7 Katia Muricy, *A Razão Cética*, Companhia das Letras 1988, p. 36

8 Recently, John Gledson's analyses have drawn attention to this more subtle ironies revealing Machado's patriotism

9 Gilberto Freyre,*Sobrados e Mucambos*, pp. 117 et seq.; in one of his essays written in English ("Brazil…") Freyre remarks: "The lawyers, university graduates, and doctors of medicine who returned from Coimbra, Paris, England, Germany and, later, those who were educated in Brazil - Olinda, São Paulo, Bahia, where the Brazilian Government established schools of law and medicine - brought to public life, with the relish of their youth, the latest English ideas and the latest French fashions. They undermined the prestige of their fathers and grandfathers and established, by contrast, their superiority over the old country gentlemen. This was done by the white as well as by the quasi-white and colored new men: cap-and-gown aristocrats. **The Emperor Dom Pedro II, a pedantic boy** at the time, **attracted** the sympathy and support of young **men returned from abroad with a European educatio**n, or educated in those **new schools in Brazil. Dom Pedro II delighted in presiding, with an air of European superiority**, over cabinets of elderly country gentlemen, who knew only the Latin and Portuguese Classics taught them by priests. Some of these were men of profound good sense, but without any European experience. And it was principally the new French and English culture or learning that gave one prestige."

[10] Gilberto Freyre, "Brazil", subtitle: **Youth and Social and Political Reform:** Notwithstanding the fact that they were young and prone to **sensualism** of the body as well as to **excesses of the mind, bachelors of arts and lawyers, educated in Europe or according to the new theories and methods, became the censors** of their elders' sexual excesses, which in Brazil were a substitute, especially in the plantations, for more refined tastes or interests of an intellectual nature. When these young men [like Simão Bacamarte] turned **patriots they became ardent nationalists**; and some even laid down their lives in **political martyrdom**, [see Bacamarte's heroic gesture facing bravely the rebellious crowd] like the students of a Russian novel. Some were reabsorbed again by the native environment; but the majority, once the feeling of **disgust with colonial habits** had become spent or attenuated, became a **creative element of differentiation and of social and political reform.**

[11] The ambiguity and instability of emotions (oscillating between friendliness and violence) in the Cordiality-complex will be the center of sociological and anthropological investigation in the 1930ies (G. Freyre, S.B. de Holanda)

[12] O. Vianna, I, XII, VII, 326 for the complex of loyalty and respect. Vianna describes the different forms of symbolic and economic submission brought about by the autarchy of the latifundio, where a patriarchal clan-leader and landowner appropriates public power and administrative functions. The influence and power over those basically private institutions reaching from the City Assembly (Camara) to charitable or scientific institutions (like Simao Bacamarte's Casa Verde, the asylum for the madmen) are sustained by a dependant mass of agragados, (capangas, cerca-igrejas, caceteiros, capoeiras who take care of the defensive functions, manipulating elections or blackmailing voters); cf. 323-333.

[13] There is a wordplay involved in the story of Costa, the nephew of tio Salomão: Salomon, in Ernest Renan's laic reading of the Canticle of Canticles, is not the venerable figure of divine Grace, but the despotic oriental patriarch, polygamous and anti-ethical… In this view, when Costa's cousin tries to explain the apparently superstitious idea that Costa has to carry the fate of tio Salomon's curse, Machado hints at the terrible heritage of slavery, which disabled the descendants of the big landowners.

[14] Irony concerning what Freyre calls the mimetic tendencies: cf. Brazil: And though the qualities of the Brazilian statesmen during the Empire period was imitative rather than creative, some of them were remarkable for their political talent as well as for their tact and ability as diplomats.

[15] Freyre, Brazil, about the waves of insurrection involving the mestizo administrators: The "Minas Insurrection" was a revolution of university men and liberal Catholic priests. So also were the two revolutions in Pernambuco in 1817 and 1824, and the so-called Tailors' Revolution, in Bahia. In most of those liberal movements the leaders were Brazilian who had been educated under the influence of French or English ideas, and some of the most prominent leaders were mestizos.

[16] Katia Muricy, *A Razão Cética*, Companhia das Letras 1988, p. 36

[17] This may be another hint to Dom Pedro II's notorious modesty and scrupulous care about public finances….

[18] Cf. chapter VI, first paragraph. The indignation about this refusal transforms Porfirio:

he now feels the ambition of government and his rhetoric enthusiasm lifts up the minds of the pusillanimous citizens, gathering 300 - although the majority, "because of anxiety or habits of education, would not descend into the streets…"

[19] According do O. Vianna, this sort of charismatic leader (who generally lacks instruction and has to deal with a total lack of institutions preparing and orienting public decisions) has to be a Teireisias, guided by intuitions or superstitions. Cf.Vianna I, 393[20] José Murilo de Carvalho, *D. Pedro II*, São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 2007; cf. pp.**133 e** 136**.**

The Bad Penny of Contingency: Literary Anthologies and the Test of Time

WOJCIECH MA³ECKI

In this article I shall analyze a recent attempt, made by David Hopkins,[1] at theorizing Samuel Johnson's test of time principle as a criterion for composing literary anthologies. I believe that Hopkins's idea is definitely worth exploring since in developing it not only does he try to restore the value of Johnson's principle in an interesting, if ultimately unconvincing, way, but also touches on some fundamental problems pertaining to aesthetics and literary studies in general.

Hopkins presents his idea in an article that is divided into two parts[2]: the first (and larger) section consists of a concrete, insightful analysis of the content and underlying assumptions of some existing anthologies of English verse, while in the second, he puts forward "a speculative suggestion which connects some of the issues connected with anthologising with the larger question of 'personal' or 'contingent' versus 'objective' critical judgement" (290). Given the topic of this paper, I am interested in that latter part of his article, but in order to prepare the ground for my arguments, I need to recall what Hopkins does in the former.

To distill Hopkins's argument, he levels two main objections against the anthologies that he scrutinizes (which objections he extrapolates to all existing anthologies of English poetry): namely, that their criteria of selection are (a) not objective and/or (b) inconsistent. The charge of inconsistency need not concern us here, because the weight Hopkins puts on it in his article is lesser, so let us take a closer look what objection (b) actually boils down to. Hopkins stresses that even though various anthologies are often conceived (and advertized) as presenting a comprehensive account of "'the best' writing" within English literature, or as being "neutrally 'representative'" of a given period, or are designed as providing "'timeless' and permanently valid a presentation of each poet," they actually constitute "a highly selective interpretative overview" of the matter, and reflect various "short-lived fashions," which happen to dominate in literary community at a given time, or even "highly polemical and personal views of their [i.e. the editors'] subject" (292-3, 303, 297). What makes the situation even worse, to Hopkins's mind, is that these views very often do not concern aesthetic matters, being instead merely "ideological commitments" and "political" stances (299, 300). Note that the case here is not simply that there exists a contradiction between what the anthologies present themselves, or are perceived, to be, and what they really are (although this discrepancy is surely something to be avoided), as Hopkins finds problematic even those anthologies whose authors *explicitly* declare their judgments to be slanted in this or that direction. The problem is simply this partiality itself (personal, communal, political, historical, aesthetic), whether it is concealed or not.

Therefore it is no wonder that the anthology Hopkins hopes for is one that would be able to escape the contingency of the editors' personal tastes and the wider historical context in which they are embedded, by being "objective," based on "trans-historical consensus" and capable of doing justice to the poetry that represents the real artistic value (301, 304). I believe that many of literary scholars would approve of this ideal, yet the question remains: How could that ambitious plan be realized? As often happens in such cases, Hopkins's solution is based on the wisdom of old, namely on the aforementioned principle of the 'test of time,' as coined by Samuel Johnson. Dr. Johnson's idea is that an appropriate touchstone of the literary excellence of a given work would be the continuous "esteem" it enjoys for at least one hundred years.[3] Hopkins, in turn, is convinced that such a "principle" can well serve as a criterion for compiling his envisaged anthology (300).

Now, this all looks quite clear and neat at the first sight, but becomes more obscure and problematic after closer scrutiny. The source of the problem, which is a very general one, affecting not merely anthologizing but practically every other aspect of human existence, was perfectly described by the American literary theorist Stanley Fish in his book *The Trouble with Principle*. And I cannot think of any better way of summarizing the gist of Fish's argument that by quoting the following words of Richard Rorty, taken from the blurb he wrote for that book: "The trouble with principles is that they are either so abstract and contentless that all the work is done filling in the details, or else sufficiently concrete as to be very controversial indeed."[4] To be sure, Hopkins seems to be aware that there may be some problems in applying the principle of the test of time, but he apparently thinks that these can be resolved by sufficient amount of "hard labour" and with the help of some "tips" and "hunches" (302). I, however, believe, and am going to argue below, that there is some important aspect, which concerns the very foundation of Hopkins's main idea, in which they cannot be resolved at all.

But let us first take a look at one potential historicist objection Hopkins himself considers in detail. Namely, that Johnson's idea is invalid since we simply cannot talk about the continuous esteem that some works have enjoyed through centuries, and this is because the standards of taste changed drastically during that time. As a consequence, even though these works might have been admired, they were esteemed for different reasons at different times, which makes any talk of continuity in this case rather dubious. Alluding to Fish's theory of interpretation Hopkins responds that *even if* it is the case that different "interpretive communities," in evaluating various works of literature, have relied on different, often incommensurable and conflicting, principles, the principle of the 'test of time' does not itself need to be concerned with the reasons those works were esteemed in the first place. It can work sufficiently well when limited to the sole fact that they were held in esteem at all. The reason I emphasized the words "even if," is that Hopkins apparently thinks that it is actually *not* the case that we, today's readers, are separated from the interpretive communities of the past by some insurmountable cultural barrier. As a proof, he evokes his firm belief that he actually understands, and agrees with, critical judgments of his noble predecessors such as "Alexander Pope… , Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Matthew Arnold" – and of course, Samuel Johnson (304). Yet, as we have seen, Hopkins does not let his refutation of the historicist critique of Johnson's principle rely solely, or even mainly, on this evidence. I believe that he is right to do so, and this is because for historicists, Hopkins's firm belief would constitute not a refutation, but a confirmation of their views. After all, what else could Hopkins's declaration of his complete agreement with Samuel Johnson et al. be, but evidence that he simply imposed his own categories and presumptions on their views (which, for historicists, must *by definition* be different than his since they emerged in a different historical context)? Of course, Hopkins, quite rightly, would see this argument as begging the question, but let me stress that the other side would see his counterarguments in exactly the same way, i.e. as guilty of circularity. Therefore the whole debate, at least when staged in this way, is pointless and this pointlessness is in fact due to an important feature of historicism to which I will return in the conclusion of my article.

For now, let me point out that when Hopkins refers to the theory of interpretive communities, he misses one of its key points: namely, the gist of the theory is not that different interpretive communities evaluate the same texts differently (which would be a rather mild claim that surely would not have been able to make it as famously controversial as it in fact has become); it is rather that we cannot even talk about *the same text* here, as each text assumes a different identity in different communities, even though it may bear exactly the same title.[5] This thesis has important implications for the notion of the identity of the literary work, and it has lead thinkers such as Richard Shusterman to propose a distinction between the work's referential (or "logico-grammatical")

identity, which is preserved in different interpretive communities, and its substantial identity, which changes respectively.[6] Given that, one could object that it is indeed problematic to talk about the continual esteem for a given poem in different interpretive communities, since although we can talk about the same poem in referential terms, when it comes to its "substantive nature," there are indeed only different poems. But this argument would, again, result in an impasse, since Hopkins could reply that his reading experience tells him something quite different, to which a follower of the interpretive communities theory would object that Hopkins's experience is merely an illusion.

Therefore, even though I discussed these arguments not without reason (their importance will become clear by the end of this article), I will not enter this path, just as I will not try to attack Hopkins's position by undermining the validity of the general notion of trans-historicality and objectivity. This would not only be boring, as we have heard such debates for countless many times before, but it would also reduce itself to an exchange of invectives (even if very polite, academic ones). What I am going to do instead, is to show how the bad penny of contingency turns up in the very details of Hopkins's project that aims to avoid contingency in the first place.

As I said, the trouble with all principles seems to be that when they are sufficiently unproblematic, they are too abstract to be useful, and when we try to make them concrete, they become controversial, mostly because they get automatically involved in distinctions and decisions that are enough particularistic and biased to be opposed by those who happen to occupy different positions. Let us see how this mechanism works in Hopkins's case. To begin with, he realizes that the task of his hypothetical anthologist "would not be at all a straightforward", but rather a "tricky" matter. After all, even though, "[s]ome leads would be provided by explicit declarations of a particular poem's or passage's continued esteem," others "would emerge from more oblique kinds of evidence" (301). One of the latter would be "what Tom Mason has usefully described as the 'consequential' properties [of poems]: the ways in which their phrasings and rhythms, and the thought which those phrasings and rhythms convey and embody, have reverberated in the minds of later poets and have left their mark on the texture of those poets' work" (302). Hopkins stipulates that the "tracking down" of such properties would demand a lot of "hard labor" – which can be now fortunately facilitated by various "electronic resources" – but I have major doubts that we can be really even that optimistic.

The question of influence is indeed a rather tricky game, because one cannot really know where to break the 'consequential' chain. For instance, if at some point we realize that we have to include in our anthology poem *x* (unjustly neglected by previous anthologists), because it influenced a widely respected poem *y*, then shouldn't we be also looking for poem *z* (or poems *z, p, r, q*) that

might have influenced poem *x* in the first place? And then the poems which had influenced poem z (or poems *z, p, r, q*)? And then… etc., etc. And should all of them find a place in our anthology because of that chain of influence (if they were not meant to be included for some other reason)? If not, what would the criteria be to decide to what extent the influence exerted on the famous poem *y* actually counts?

Also, one does not need to evoke Harold Bloom's theory of the anxiety of influence to know that literary influence can also be negative, in the sense that an author may be inspired by another author's work to write something completely *different* then the latter.[7] I believe that this kind of relation also counts as an influence, and that the properties of the former author's poem surely are consequential in this case. This is because even though he tries to be different, one can only be different with regard to something else (one cannot be just different in general sense), and if he tried to write differently than yet another author, he would write differently in a different way.[8] Now how would Hopkins want to measure this, and, moreover, in a trans-historical, objective way? In addition to that, the example of Harold Bloom's *Anxiety of Influence* makes us realize that the very conception of consequentiality and influence in literature is not an uncontroversial one, as there are many conceptions thereof that are incommensurable or contradictory to each other, and some of these even urge us to stop talking about consequentiality altogether. It follows, then, that we cannot choose all of these conceptions at the same time, and whatever our judgment would be in this regard, it would certainly not result in our occupying a trans-historical position, since each of those theories is a product of its own age (recall that it is hard to imagine Bloom's theory to be invented in all its aspects before Freud). Also, it is worth noting that Bloom's conception may be terribly misleading, as far as the anthologizing purpose is concerned, as the history of poetry certainly does not constitute a succession of duels between the poetic giants such as Shakespeare, Yeats and others. It has certainly happened more than once that a great figure was inspired (in a negative, or positive way), by works which we would now certainly consider as minor or unworthy of aesthetic attention. What to do in such cases? Should we include those poems, too, despite that fact that our goal is doing justice to poetic excellence?

The same question refers, e.g., to all those poems which had been widely circulating among the so-called popular audience during 15th, 16th or 17th century, yet are now known only to few literary historians and, in addition, are rather poor and primitive examples of literature from that period. I believe that there are quite many such cases in English literature (and possibly in all European literatures), and thus the question emerges: should we include them too in Hopkins's anthology? After all, they stood the test of time, and they would qualify as teaching us something new about the history of our literature. But,

on the other hand, they hardly represent what Hopkins, most of our colleagues, and I myself would consider of sound artistic value. Should we, then, solve the question by saying that they indeed were esteemed, but not universally, since only among some marginal group, and thus can be ignored? But what 'marginal' means here is a moot point at best. One could risk hypothesizing that the so-called popular audience of literature, even though its judgments have often had no chance to be represented in scholarly books, in fact has always been significantly larger (note that I include here oral literature as well) than the audience which admired the same poems we, being their inheritors, now conceive of as the best in our tradition. Moreover, as authors like Pierre Bourdieu say, the very distinction between the high and popular culture is determined not by aesthetic values, but rather by sociopolitical factors, which implies that there might be a risk that by caring for the poetic excellence of the works we include in our anthology we are in fact representing a hidden political agenda.[9]

But even if we do not believe Pierre Bourdieu, we should be aware of the various hidden, or explicit, aesthetic agendas that may be also in play here, and to understand why this may be so, let us think about the challenge that Palgrave's famous anthology poses to Hopkins's idea.[10] On the one hand, Hopkins's own principle would encourage him to include the whole content of Palgrave's collection (or at least all the poems that have survived the changes made in its subsequent editions). After all, the latter not only has been around for more than one hundred years, but has also significantly affected the "readers' minds." As Hopkins himself eagerly notes, "more than 650,000 copies [of Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*] had been printed before the Second World War" and it can be taken as responsible for "the establishment of the popular assumption – still widespread, for example, among students coming up to university – that the word 'poem' denotes a piece of writing usually cast in the first person, and printable on one, or at the very most two or three, sides of paper" (291). On the other hand, that responsibility itself is a symptom of the fact that Palgrave's is not an anthology representative of "the whole of English literature," and if anything, it is representative of Palgrave's own contingent tastes. In any event, Hopkins would have to choose from the material that his principle would provide him with, which in itself is not necessarily wrong; the only difficulty is on what grounds he would make his selection. He himself admits that it would be impossible not to make any selection at all, but thinks one can be helped here by various "hunches" and "tips." But here exactly contingency strikes back. For there is no such thing as a "trans-historical" hunch or tip, because in order to be what they are they must perforce be *somebody*'s hunches and tips, and thus must be historically situated, i.e. contingent. Now, behind Hopkins's project there lies the idea that something else, something transcending our unpleasantly contingent condition, is doing the anthologizing job for us. Here, the test of time means that it is the time, not

we ourselves, which nominates the poems to be anthologized, and our role is reduced to that of carefully *reporting* time's unshaken and unambiguous decisions. But as I have been trying to show (by scrutinizing, perhaps too meticulously, some of Hopkins's claims and by multiplying all those troubling questions), we must not only interpret what the time is saying to us (for instance, by applying the category of consequentiality), but we also have to select from its nominees, and in both cases we can rely on nothing else but on our own idiosyncratic judgments, or our own historically contextualized traditions. And it does not really help when Hopkins says that the works that

> have genuinely passed 'the test of time' are those which have survived repeated examination and comparison, by successive tribunals of judges, each coming to them without (or with a variety of) professional axes to grind, with diverse aesthetic assumptions, and from widely different historical and cultural perspectives (303).

This stipulation is again too general (and thus no stipulation at all), and if we try to specify it, we will approach thousands of troubling questions, which will demand thousands of decisions based on thousands of contingent criteria. After all, we will have to choose who is worthy to be called a "judge" in these matters (and it is significant here whom Hopkins mentions as his partners from the past in the dialogue on literary matters), how many judges are necessary in each case, how "diverse" the "aesthetic assumptions" need to be, and how "widely" said perspectives must differ. Besides, the idea that in order to arrive at the right judgment in a given case, we must first consult as many viewpoints as possible, is itself an invention of certain traditions in the cultural history of the West,[11] and would be met with astonishment, if not with abomination, by many lovers of English literature in previous ages, and even by some of them who are our contemporaries.

Since the points I have been making so far are clearly indebted to Stanley Fish's theories, let me conclude, then, by making a clearly Fishian move, which consists of the following two steps. Asking the question: "Does all this mean that Hopkins, or anybody else, should forget about the idea of compiling such an anthology?" and answering it with a simple: "Of course, not." And if anyone find this answer surprising (given what I have said above), then let me explain my point by referring to one implicit distinction Hopkins makes in his article, when he says that the days of 'theory' are gone, since now we live in an age of historicism (294). There is indeed some truth in this claim, because theory, as a certain form of practicing literary criticism (and maybe this is the meaning of the term Hopkins has in mind, since he places the term in inverted commas), has doubtless lost the celebrated position it once occupied in the 70's through the 90's. But on the other hand it is misleading, insofar as it contrasts theory with historicism. And false it is, because historicism, including the one I myself have presented above, is itself a theory, no matter how eagerly some of its

proponents may want to deny that. Moreover, along with all kinds of theories of interpretive communities, relativisms, objectivisms and so forth it is one of the most general theories that one can imagine (after all, it concerns the very nature of reality and human subjectivity), something which separates it completely from any practice, including the practice of anthologizing. In other words, the thesis that everything is contingent, or historically contextualized, cannot serve as a guidance for practice (what to do and what to avoid doing), because whatever we do will always be contingent.[12] Therefore, my point is not that Hopkins should avoid compiling his anthology, but that he should not think of it what he currently does. For even though it surely would be something different from any other anthology that exists, and it would be something interesting and educating, too (and this is a reason good enough to compile it eventually) it would not be, as Hopkins thinks, different in the sense of being trans-historical and objective. But this is no fault at all, because nothing can be different in that way, i.e. nothing can prevent the bad penny of contingency from turning up.[13]

Notes and References

1 See David Hopkins, "On Anthologies," *Cambridge Quarterly,* Vol. 37, No.3 (2008), pp. 285-304 – further referred to parenthetically in the text.

2 See *Ibid.*

3 See, *Samuel Johnson: Selected Poetry and Prose*, eds. Frank Brady, William Wimsatt (Berkeley, 1978), pp. 299-301.

4 See Stanley Fish, *The Trouble With Principle* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999).

5 See Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text In This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), especially chaps. 13-15. See also S. Fish, "One More Time," in *Postmodern Sophistry* : *Stanley Fish And the Critical Enterprise*, ed. Gary A. Olson and Lynn Worsham (New York, 2004), pp. 265-297.

6 See Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (New York, 2000), pp. 93-95. Cf. Joseph Margolis, *Interpretation: Radical But Not Unruly* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 33-34.

7 See H. Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence* (Oxford, 1973), see also Harold Bloom, *Agon* (Oxford, 1982).

8 In my account of difference I am in debted to Stanley Fish, see, e.g. his *Doing What Comes Naturally* (Durham, 1989).

9 See, Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984); cf. R. Shusterman, *Performing Live: Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Art* (Ithaca, 2000), chap. 2.

[10] See Francis Turner Palgrave, *The Golden Treasury*, ed. *Christopher Ricks* (London: Penguin, *1991)*

[11] Cf. Stanley Fish, *The Trouble With Principle*, op. cit., chap. 8.

[12] See, Stanley Fish, *There's No Such Thing As Free Speech… And It's a Good Thing, Too* (New York, 1994), chap. 14; Stanley Fish, *Professional Correctness: Literary Studies and Political Change* (Oxford, 1995), especially Lecture III.

[13] Some of the main arguments of the present article were presented at a seminar of the STAR (Scotland's Transatlantic Relations) Project, which took place in Sept. 2008, at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, The University of Edinburgh (the main speakers at the seminar, which was dedicated to the "Principles for a Transatlantic Literary Anthology," were Susan Manning and Andrew Taylor). I would like to thank participants of the seminar for their comments, and also my colleagues at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (at which I was a visiting research fellow from Sep. to Nov. 2008): David Wall, for his remarks concerning the title of my text, and particularly Eric White who read the first draft of this paper and made many useful suggestions.

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Myth and Tradition as Elements of Plot : An Analysis of R.K. Narayan's The Financial Expert

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Narayan's unmediated fidelity with life has taken his novels to a constricted experience. He has a genuine sincerity in searching and recording the Indian culture, myth, tradition and religious values to the readers of both the halves of the globe. His works express a peculiar piety towards the existence of Indian life. It means Narayan's fictional characters are not just the conscious driven characters but they are directly driven by the real experience of life. Accordingly Narayan's novels are found without any discrepancy with the representation of Indian life, culture, characters and sensibility. With relation to Indian English writer's achievement and success of Indian sensibility Prof. C.D. Narsimhaiah writes:

> The Indian novel in English has shown a capacity to accommodate a wide range of concerns: in Mulk Raj Anand a humane concern for the underdog, not just a preoccupation with economic determinism; in R.K. Narayan the comic mode as equivalent to the tragic in his evocation of mediocrity: and K. Nagarajan surprises by his sensitive handling of the human significance in the religious and the logical labyrinth so characteristic of Hindu society. While Raja Rao recaptures the magnificent mythical imagination of Indian antiquity successively in the three novels and short stories he has written to date he has at the sane time, to use T.S. Eliot's words 'altered' the 'expression' to accommodate a distinct, profoundly Indian sensibility. (P 68)

The art of Narayan, with relation to myth and reality is identified by A.S. Dasan as

> . . . part of mainstream comic tradition of the world literature. Mythic realism that exudes stoical perception and transmogrification of facts in his own inimitable style is the corner stone and operative agent in his literary canons. (p 83)

Accordingly, Narayan, writing novels of Indian sensibility with myths and traditions upholds concurrently the literary canon and structure of English novel in a skillfully maintained order to fit the Indian life in the structure of English novel. In view of this, Narayan's representation of Indian life, particularly of myth and tradition, and the maintenance of English novel structure is the objective of the present writing.

In general the structure of the plot includes exposition, foreshadowing**,** inciting force, conflict, rising action, crisis, climax, falling action and resolution or denouement. In most plots, the events arise out of conflict experienced by the main character. As the character makes choices and tries to resolve the problem, the story's action is shaped and plot is generated. In most stories, these events arise out of conflict experienced by the main character. Conflict is the essence in creating the fiction and plot. Rising action is the event or character that triggers the conflict. Most plots develop because a character is in a situation involving conflict.

In the maintenance of this structure of the plot sometimes myth inclines to embrace the entire lives of characters in a novel. In this aspect myth and literature has causal connection. In this connection the formal selection of myth encompasses the innumerable shared characteristics of narratives, characters, image and theme. They are connected by number, degree and diversity of similarities between specific myth and individual work of literature. The myths are in the light of patterned resemblances to figures, actions, plots, meanings or significances associated with myths or the culturally sanctioned tales of a civilization's gods and heroes.

Accordingly, the present argument, in spite of considering the examination of Narayan's novel under the perspectives of myth criticism, considers the myths and traditions that Indian culture believes and follows, used in the novel to examine them in developing the plot of the novel- *The Financial Expert (1952)*.

Interestingly, Narayan is found using tradition in the form of belief, a story, an incident, a practice, rites or custom either consciously or unconsciously in the novels. On the whole both the myth and tradition in the selected novel is examined from the literary perspectives to examine their influences in bringing the foreshadowing, conflicts, crisis, climax and falling of action in the construction of the plot.

Narayan's construction of plots seems simple at the basic level. But in fact they are cautiously structured based on the existing beliefs, practices, customs, mythical elements, incidents, symbols, tradition and the complete life style that are in the milieu of his culture and society. In structuring the plots Narayan has amply used the above mentioned parts of life for the purpose of his narrating and structuring the plot. They are even used either intentionally or

unintentionally as forethoughts and tactics in narrating the story in his intended way. Hence his plots, when examined thoroughly and carefully, reveal the complexity they have hidden in them. The complexities in the structure of the plots are parallel to that of any English novelist.

The plot of the novel *The Financial Expert* is about the central character Margayya, the protagonist. The dramatic events of Margayya's rise and downfall in his financial venture are the focal point of the novel. In picturing the rise and downfall the author employs various techniques and devices with intelligently chosen incidents, facts, practices and beliefs associated with Indian life. The incidents associated with Indian life are inescapable with Indian myth and tradition. The author, though not relying completely on these, intelligently and timely utilises them to develop the plot and to bring his proposed meaning to the novel. With regard to the plot of the novel *The Financial Expert* William Walsh says:

> Arrangement, scheme, composition, these are the terms that come at once to mind after reading *The Financial Expert*. This story of Margayya has an intricate and silken organisation, a scheme of composition holding everything together in vibrant and balanced union. (P 34)

In this rise and fall of Margayya, the financial wizard is narrated in different phases in the novel. In all these phases Margayya follows the myths in the form of rituals strictly and devotedly to fulfil his desire of earning money. In the second phase Margayya enters a different career of his life through Dr. Pal, a journalist, correspondent and author. With the assistance of Dr. Pal Margayya earns enough money by publishing a book by name "Domestic Harmony", a book about sex life. In the third phase he is found again a 'financial adviser' and money lender. Further he establishes his money lending business by receiving deposits and paying fabulous rates of interest. Everything Margayya does in his financial mission throughout the plot is motivated by his insatiable yearn for wealth and the obedient and dutifully followed myths. In the fourth phase, after loosing all the money he earned Margayya thinks of restating his original business which he was doing under the banyan tree with his 'financial expertise'.

In these four phases Narayan uses and utilises various existing social practices and beliefs of myth and tradition in order to construct and develop the plot of the novel. Accordingly Margayya's desire for money is always found influencing and persuading by the myth and tradition that he has believed and even of those who suggests him. These myths and tradition join together to enhance and empower his ardent desire which is the core of the plot.

Myth has been identified and defined in various explanations and definitions. They have acquired and occupied their own identity and importance

in understanding anything based on them. Similarly they are found used copiously in the plot of the novel *The Financial Expert*. Apart form their significant contribution in the development of the plot they have even played symbolically to enhance the feeling and meaning of a situation to the reader as well as the plot of the novel.

Margayya is introduced with his everyday transaction and activities associated with myth and tradition which are well organised to develop the plot coherently. The use of these mythical and traditional practices in the novel reveals the character of Margayya who has deep faith in following tradition and customs of life around him. They even foreshadow that in the future chapters where there are influences of tradition and influence of myths in the life of the protagonist.

The influence of myth and tradition on the plot and on the life of Margayya is, for instance, in the chapter describing the meeting with the priest in order to get a solution for his present financial crisis. The meeting of the priest is an influence of traditional idea and practice of an individual or of Indian society. The plot at this moment associated with the priest reveals some of the mythical and traditional incidents which foreshadows happenings and development in the life of Margayya. Thus the incident of meeting priest is certainly an influence of tradition which is presently bringing a development and curiosity in the plot of the novel.

The use of mythical incidents not only develops the plot but also foreshadows the future events of the novel sensibly. At one particular point the priest narrates Margayya a story of mythical character 'Markandayya' which is an influencing event in the plot on the mind of Margayya. The narration of this mythical story in the plot has certainly influenced Margayya and the plot simultaneously and brings in the idea in reader that there would be an incident related to the performance of *Puja* and provides a greater chance and space to the development of the plot.

The scenes intensifying the character of Margayya to have a strong belief and trust in worshipping god and following the tradition and rituals are further more given in this part of the novel. When Margayya and the priest reach the temple the author provides some more narration related to the mythical story and characters associated with the *Ramayana*.

Further in the same scene the narration related to myth and tradition continues. Margayya followed the priest into the shrine. The priest asks him to squat on the floor and offers him a tumbler of milk which he says that would make Margayya alright. Margayya refuses to drink milk. But the priest tells him:

> "Milk is one of the forms of Goddess Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth. When you reject it or treat it indifferently, it means you reject her. She is a Goddess who always stays on the tip of her

toes all the time, ever ready to turn and runaway. There are ways of wooing and keeping her. When she graces a house with her presence, the master of our house becomes distinguished, famous and wealthy." Margayya reverently touched the tumbler and very respectfully drank the milk, taking care not to spill even a drop. (P 35)

The narration at this point describes how Narayan has used the incidents of myth and tradition brilliantly to develop the plot and arrange the sequence in order to bring interest and curiosity in the readers. In this particular scene or incident itself Narayan has brought in profusely the incidents of myth and tradition either directly or indirectly to foreshadow the development or happenings in the life of Margayya. By the influence of myth and tradition Margayya listens from the priest that a drastic change happens in his life. Margayya. They lead to the development of the plot to make Margayya dedicate himself deeply and devotedly to perform the *Puja*. By these influences of myths and traditions the novel is further built up with incidents related to the development of the protagonist.

The mythical atmosphere is created so densely in the mind of Margayya that he is found wedged in midst of those. They have made up his mind and attitude at the moment to accept completely without second thought. They prepare him and set him to be an ardent follower of myths and traditions as he is bound to follow them obediently. Similarly, after the incident of milk the priest narrates from *The Mahabharata* the story Kubera which is again a story of based on myth. The author writes that Kubera is:

> . . . the wealthiest man in creation, who undertook a long arduous penance as atonement for spoiling a drop of milk on the floor of his palace. When the story ended and a pause ensued, Margayya felt he could no longer keep back his request. He felt somewhat shy as he said: "I want to acquire wealth. Can you show me a way? I will do anything you suggest" (P 36)

The belief of examining one's horoscope at the moment of difficulty in life is a usual practice of Indian society. Narayan uses this practice of the society into his plot to develop further the life of Margayya and to develop the plot of the novel. In this part the traditional atmosphere to set Margayya's mind for the acceptance of myths is created in the following manner in the novel:

> The last worshipper had prostrated on the ground before the inner sanctuary. A couple of feeble oil lamps were alight; a mixed smell of burning oil, flowers,and incense hung in the air. That was the combination of the scent which always gave Margayya a feeling of elation. He shuts his eyes. For a moment he felt that he was in a world free from all worrying problems. (P 47)

While describing the search of horoscope Narayan introduces some traditions with regard to marriage and related affairs. After the horoscope is found Margayya reads both of his and his wife's names. The prefixes given to his name – "Chinranjivi" and to his wife's – "Sowbhagyavathi" give the reader some humorous description as well as some irony. However, the description given in this situation introduces some more traditional pictures and practices which help to develop the plot by providing the history of Margayya's life.

After this event Margayya takes his horoscope to the priest. His examination of the horoscope further develops the plot on the basis of myth associated with Saturn and Planetary deities and the ways to please them. The scene has further descriptions of myths and tradition which accordingly develops the plot. Margayya's belief in myth and fear about it is described by the author as: "He felt as if Saturn were around him, and might give him a twist and lift him up to plunge him into the ocean of misery if he did not behave properly" (P 56). The priest further gives a number of rules, regulations and descriptions to perform the *Puja*. Margayya listens them carefully and agrees to follow them carefully. He even asks the priest the doubts he has about the result of his performance. The priest says:

> The *Shastras* lay down such and such rituals for such and such ends. Between a man who performs them and one who doesn't, the chances are greater for the former. That's all I can say. The results are . . . you may have results or you may not . . . or you may have results and wish that you had failed. (P 56)

The description of traditional set up of the temple is utilised by the author to set the mind of Margayya to listen and follow whatever the priest says. Margayya becomes feeble and humble in following the instruction of the priest. Accordingly, Margayya, without second word agrees to bring his horoscope on the demand of the priest. The day he wants to search the horoscope "He sprang up from bed. In a quarter of an hour he was ready, bathed, wearing a clean dress, and his forehead smeared with red vermilion and a splash of sacred ash". (P 52)

In the next section Margayya's preparation and performance of *Puja* is described. In describing all, the author based on the earlier descriptions develops the plot and takes the reader to an interesting part of the novel. The description of the scene for the preparation for his *Puja* is written as follows:

> He gave his wife a list of articles she should supply him with – such as jaggery, turmeric, coloured cooked rice, refined sugar, black-gram cake, sweetened sesamum, curd, spiced rice and various kinds of fruit and honey. He would require these in small quantities morning and evening for offering – and most of them were also to be his diet during the period of *Japa*. (P 58).

The narrative of Margayya's preparations is entirely a tradition and myth based description. The priest suggest to arrange pure ghee made of milk drawn from smoke coloured cow to mix with the blackened lotus petal to putting it on the forehead after the prayer. The mythical element like inscribing a certain Sanskrit syllable on apiece of deer skin is an interesting part too. Margayya's agony in finding it and the priest's instruction to find it at home as "elders have always possessed them for sitting on and praying" (P 59) are very much associated with myth and tradition. The red lotus incident has some mythical meaning and traditional values particularly while performing Lakshmi *Puja*. Accordingly the search for a red lotus makes the plot to develop the association with Dr.Pal and develops to further curious stage. However before establishing a complete association with Dr.Pal Margayya performs his *Puja* for forty days which has complete touch of tradition and myth pictures. All these represents Margayya's as well as the author's inseparable and inescapable association with myth and tradition in life and plot respectively. With such unavoidable nature of myth as well as social condition it is true to consider that myths traditions are definitely influenctial. Therefore the very nature myth has undeniably influenced the author and provided him with an occasion to develop the plot on the basis of myths availed in Indian life.

With such a growing dependence on the construction of the plot myths and traditions are found to be the elements of the plot itself along with the other elements. Without the myths and traditions used in the novel the construction of Margayya's life the author intended was not achievable. The myths are even associated with the tempo of the novel to bring in a drastic and sudden transformation in the life of Margayya. To enhance the argument it is significant to discuss once again the element of plot like foreshadowing.

Foreshadowing frequently serves two purposes : it builds suspense by raising questions that encourage the reader to go on and find out more about the event that is being foreshadowed. Foreshadowing is also a means of making a narrative more believable by partially preparing the reader for events which are to follow. In building up the foreshadowing different authors use different things, different events, and different subjects in different ways. Among these myth is one significant subject which authors use extensively to bring out the required effect in their works.

By these series of mythological narrations and descriptions of traditional practices the author forecasts the idea that definitely there are incidents in the plot and character depending on myth and tradition. Even the plot develops and takes turns based on some myths and traditions which are inside and outside the incidents of the plot of the novel. On this whole set of mythical narration and descriptions of tradition further occurrences in the life of Margayya take place. Margayya the person and the character gets mould himself based on this

episode. The developments in the plot and in the life of Margayya are purely influenced by these mythical narrations and traditional attitudes.

On these occasions Narayan is found illustrating the Hindu myths and tradition as a profound author who has understood the psychology and collective unconscious of the individuals and society of his country. He intensely penetrates both into the inner desire of an individual and of the Indian society to explore the human weakness for the myth and tradition. But Narayan never ridicules these conditions of the individual or society whereas he expresses his deep concern towards them by weaving innocence and inevitability of the characters. Similarly the inevitable condition of Margayya in following the tradition and accepting the myths he hears or knows in his life further take place. The plot, even, develops on the basis of his practise of the myths he believes in.

Whatever the mythical pictures and traditional descriptions the author uses, they certainly facilitate to develop the plot. The picture of Margayya's preparation and performance is entirely based on mythical and traditional beliefs. These descriptions have developed the plot and taken it to the level of creating curiosity in the reader. Narayan, at this stage completely depends on the Indian condition to develop the plot and further they are utilised to an extent as part of the plot itself.

When the earlier myths and tradition the author uses are examined it appears that their utility in the construction of the plot is highly necessary. Each myth and tradition Margayya follows are in one or the other way builds up his life as well as the plot of the novel. By each myth Margayya's life is taken to different stage all together. Each tradition he follows makes him to land in different position in this future life. The myths and traditions at one stage are so closely associated with the plot that they seem inseparable and unavoidable in the construction of the events of Margayya's life. Accordingly it happens so that without coming across the myths and traditions Margayya would not have got a turn in his life. It does not mean that myths have turned his life but his strong belief and practice made him to step into new venture in his life. Therefore Narayan in constituting the plot of the novel considers on the available and existing myths and traditions as inevitable. To conclude, as M. Thirumeni in an article on Narayan "Myths of Malgudi" say's "Myths . . . are created to teach a moral to community, . . . or to give unity to that community" (P 28) The myths and traditions of India uitlised are par with the other elements of the plot of *The Financial Expert* which are undeniably employed to bring in a greater unity in the structure of the plot.

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Review Essay

Body Consciousness, Mindfulness, Somaesthetics

Richard Shusterman, *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* , Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, PP. XV + 239.

Recent researches in neuroscience and experimental psychology (Susan Blackmore, 2003 and 2005) warrant a thorough revision of our traditional views on two related phenomena - mind and consciousness- that have been central to our understanding of the entire variety of human activities – philosophical, linguistic and social. In traditional vocabulary mind, spirit and consciousness often appear synonymous in their opposition to body understood as a mass of matter. The situation does not change even if we accept Shusterman's opinion: "The term 'soma' indicates a living, feeling, sentient body rather than a mere physical body that could be devoid of life and sensation…" In common use 'body' is understood not as a dead object, but as a living physiological entity as opposed to mind as a psychological one, a sense in which one can meaningfully use the expression "unconscious body". The body- mind dichotomy in the history of Western philosophical thought refers usually to this dichotomy of physiological and psychological entities that are biologically indivisible. Everybody is now aware of the huge body of knowledge that has emerged in recent years as critical responses to the Cartesian body-mind dichotomy. But Shusterman's proposal is ethico - religious, in its pragmatist perspectives, rather than any(merely) academic treatment in its intellectual perspectives, in restoring the cultural value of the "soma" as against its devaluation in the medieval (or even classical) philosophical and religious traditions, against, for example Plotinus' being "ashamed of being in the body," and preferring the practices of asceticism and body-punishment. Shusterman writes, "Today, when philosophy has shrunk from a global art of living into a narrow field of academic discourse, the body retains a strong presence as a theoretical (and sometimes potentially political) abstraction. However, the idea of using its cultivation for heightened consciousness and philosophical insight would probably strike most professional philosophers as an embarrassing abstraction. I hope to change this prejudice.' (P. IX) He thus appears to be a preacher rather than simply a professional / academic philosopher. Yet his writing "a *philosophy* of mindfulness and soma-esthetics" is a kind of philosophy that might be called "edifying" in the language of Richard Rorty. Shusterman's affiliation to the neo-pragmatism has been established long since the 1990s.

Theoretically, body, mind and consciousness have been considered as separate entities in the Indian tradition. The Vedic texts discern five sheaths – physical or material (*annamaya*), vital (*prâ´amaya*), psychic (*manomaya*), conscious (*vijñânarnaya*) and beatitutdinal (*ânandamaya*), one inside the other in the reversal order, the fifth one being the abode of the ultimate reality called *âtman* that is characterized by this very abode, i.e., absolute beatitude. The first three layers or covers, physical, vital and psychic might constitute what Shusterman calls "Soma" : "I often prefer to speak of *soma* rather than body to emphasize that my concern is with the living, feeling, sentient, purposive body rather than a mere physical corpus of flesh and bones." (p- XI) But the alternative impressions he proposes to use for this entity such as "somatic consciousness" and "somaesthetic consciousness" are confusing. Consciousness must necessarily be somatic because soma is the very location of consciousness. On the other hand, somaesthetic cannot be synonymous to somatic because it implies some extra properties that cannot be attributed to soma as he understands it, if by 'aesthetics' he does not mean the Greek *aesthesis*, i.e., mere feelings, sensations or even unqualified perceptual experience.(Hence soma must be attributed with the expressive intent as well).

Neuroscientists have so far failed to locate consciousness in the brain process that comprises the activities of one billion neurons, although they have detected that brain process precedes the function of consciousness. Physiologists like Francis Crick assert that consciousness is not aware of the brain process in early sensory areas, but only of the later results of that processing. Thus how can consciousness, a part of the brain process, which is itself a biological system, be treated separately from the biopsychic entities as the Indians have done? Besides, if the Sanskrit term *âtman* is understood in its correlation with the German *atman* (according to the Indo-Germanic linguistic system) that means "to breathe", then virtually *âtman* is a vital or phenomenal entity, not a transcendental one, that can be located only in the fifth sheath. Therefore the heterodox thinkers like the Buddhists reject any persisting stable entity called 'self' (*âtman*) or consciousness that experiences, and instead, they propose a stream of experiences that are blended together and provide us with an illusory "one-ness". So also is the popular theory of the American psychologist William James – "stream of consciousness".

The orthodox Indian philosophers, however, consistently propose a unitary consciousness which they name severally – *cit, citta, cetanâ, caitanya* and *vijnâna* which they distinguish from the biopsychic system. Thus *citta* is not *manas* (mind) which is counted as one (internal / *antahªkara´a*) among the organs – five sense organs and five motor organs. *Manas* is also separated from *buddhi* (*intellect*) and *ahankâra* (ego)

But sometimes *citta* is also used as an entity very close to mind, when, for example, Patañjali (2nd c. B.C.) states that there are five functions of *citta*: valid cognition, erroneous cognition, imagination, memory and sleep, and yoga aims at arresting these functions so that one attains internal enlightenment as well as the supreme goal of human life- *samâdhi* or complete self-submergence , the whole statement meaning, in other words, that *samâdhi* is nothing other than the function-less *citta* or consciousness free from the three levels of experience - waking (*j¢grat*),dreaming

(*svapna*) and dreamless sleep (*su¾upti*). This fourth state (*tur¤ya*) explains the nature of the ultimate Reality the all-pervading (pure) consciousness, devoid of the subject-object (and for that matter all binary) dichotomy, otherwise called *âtman*, *brahman*, *paramâtman*, the state of self-relished beatitude. According to this theory, then, far from being subject to any brain process or bioneurosis, consciousness itself is the sole cause of the biological, psychological and neurotic phenomena, a theory that anticipates the modern panpsychist belief that everything in the universe is conscious, there is nothing unconscious in this cosmos; consciousness was there from the start. (Blackmore, 2005:117)

Sanskrit critics of classical India have engaged themselves in rigorous debates on the nature of appreciation of the dramatic performance which they have named *rasa* (literally "juice") meaning tasting or relishing. This relish is compared to the fourth level of *citta* or consciousness in its functionless state but with a significant difference that the state of self-submergence is absolutely indeterminate , whereas the relish of the theatre is determinate experience, although the beatitude of these two states may be on par in kind. (See my essay in *Art and Experience*, 2003) But, in spite of their emphasis on consciousness, thinkers of the brahmanic ideology have never despised the body, which they have rather glorified in various ways. The Upanishadic texts have even glorified sexual union, and the visual arts of classical India have embodied the vigour of *mithuna* (sexual union) and human body on the exterior portions of temples – *Œar¤ram deva mandiram* – body is the abode of divinity. "First take care of body, then practise religious rites" is the popular slogan of the brahmanic culture, because it is the body that is the foundation of religious practice. The word *tapas* used by Patañjali does not mean torturing the body as the Œrama´as of the pre-Buddhist period were doing. Vyâsa (1st c. B.C.), Patañjali's commentator interprets *tapas* (literally,heating) as the cleansing of mind by withdrawing it from its attachment with the sensory world that obstructs concentration. But this does not imply negation of body and the world, although in the Vedic, pre-Vedic and post-Vedic periods a group of ascetics were negating both body and the world while aspiring to move in some other world that is full of some heavenly pleasure. The yogic meditation that the Buddha practised was already instructed by the Vedic texts available during his time, and, instead of negating the body, he has also advised to restrain the sensory attachment of various kinds. In the *Satipa°°hâna* aphorisms of the *Majjhimanikâya* he measures four foundations of mindfulness (upatthâna = Sanskrit *upasthâna* meaning presence/ attendance) such as body, feelings, mind and qualities (*dharmas*). In fourteen basic sections the Buddha offers an account of watching the body: the monk is mindful when breathing in and out; he knows his difficult postures; he acts with clear comprehension in his various activities; he reflects on the body as full of different kinds of impurity; he reflects on the body as constituted by the elements of earth, water, fire and wind; he compares his body to a corpse in nine different states of petrifaction. The Buddha has also advised for having negative capabilities, i.e. one must be incapable of doing crime, things such as telling lies, committing theft and

murder (*Anguttara Nikâyas.*) It seems, however, that all these observations and instructions are substantially available in the Vedic scriptures which the Buddha learns and experiences by his own practices.

II

Having learnt so much from the Indic traditions on body, mind and consciousness when one comes across the Western tradition that Shusterman consults one finds hardly any such distinction among these entities. The philosophers he consults, four continental - Michel Foucault, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Simon de Beauvoir, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and two American - William James and John Dewey , consider consciousness in its phenomenal form that eliminates the Indian trans- phenomenal aspect as well as its dreaming and sleeping levels. Merleau- Ponty's famous "body-subject" theory in its phenomenological perspectives provides Shusterman with a strong foundation for establishing his thesis of body consciousness. In appreciation of visual art, Merleau-Ponty quotes Valery: "The painter "takes his body with him", and states:

> "Indeed we cannot imagine how a *mind* could paint. It is by lending his body to the world that the artist changes the world into paintings. To understand these transubstantiations we must go back to the working actual body - not the body as a chunk of space or a bundle of functions but that body which is an intertwining of vision and movement… ("Eye and Mind",II) …. In paintings themselves we could seek a figured philosophy of vision – its iconography, perhaps. It is no accident for example, that frequently in Dutch paintings (as in many others) an empty interior is 'digested' by the round eye of the mirror. This prehuman way of seeing things is the painter's way. More completely than lights, shadows, and reflections, the mirror image anticipates, within things, the labour of vision, like all other technical objects, such as signs and tools, the mirror arises upon the open circuit (that goes) from seeing body to visible body. Every technique is a 'technique of the body'.

Thus the body is not merely visible in painting. It is also 'seeing' like the body-subject in its phenomenologically perceptual perspectives. But is it not true of Jean Ingres' painting of the female nude in his *Baigneuse de Valpincon(Valpincon Bather*, 1808)which is printed on the cover of Shusterman's book as recommended by the marketing department of the Cambridge University Press, against which he complains: "what a shock to learn that the marketing department had selected this beautiful but painfully misleading image for the cover of my book on body consciousness! As a critic of the media culture's deceptive objectifications of the body, but also as a Feldenkrais practitioner sensitive to the strain and suffering of the spine I voiced my objections." ?

The reason for this objection is more ethical than aesthetical. The painter has undoubtedly intensified the woman's (a female slave or concubine of the harems) formal beauty with her completely naked backside charged with erotic intoxication. But, although her facial expression is invisible, it embodies a passive pose, unconscious of the beauty of her body that is just meant for satisfaction of the sexual appetite of her 'keeper'. Further, the posture is anatomically uncomfortable. What then shocks Shusterman is not lack of any aesthetic quality in the picture, but lack of anatomical propriety of the posture together with indifference of the woman to her physical beauty as expressed in the posture. Instead of manifesting body consciousness, the, picture manifests just the opposite- the figure's unconsciousness of the physical presence, thus obstructing the social and somatic import that he proposes to argue out in the book. Should the reader then presuppose that he reads a book on socio-soma ethics, not aesthetics?

The said picture was put on the cover of Kenneth Clark's *The Nude* more than half a century ago (1956, reprinted Penguin 1970) where Clark has discussed Ingres' aesthetic excellence in about seven pages (143-149) quoting Ingres, "One must not dwell too much on the details of the human body; the members must be, so to speak, like shafts of columns: such they are in the greatest masters". But Clark comments, "He continued to dwell on details and his figures, far from being like columns of antique Greece, come more and more to resemble the temple sculpture of Southern India… the final expression of this Orientalism is the *Bain Ture*. It is dated 1862, and Ingres with justifiable pride, has added to his signature his age: Aetatis LXXXII." Should an aesthetician condemn Ingres' Orientalism, in the words of Shusterman, as the media culture's deceptive objectifications of the body? In responding to the marketing department's answer (to Shusterman's objection) that the picture on the cover would be attractive to the vast majority of his readers, Shusterman gives a consolatory nod that the arguments of the book would open the eyes of his vast majority of readers "to other forms of and beauties of body consciousness." Excellent! The cover then serves a powerful paradox to his arguments. But why should he instruct his readers – "Do not judge this book by its covers"?

III

The task for the reader now remains to explore forms and beauties of body consciousness with a social and somatic import (rather than what is embodied or not embodied at all in Ingres?) Clark's appreciation of Ingres' response to the female body marks its meridional earnestness, "but this impulse was combined with a passion for form, or, to be more precise, with a need to externalize certain expressive shapes; and his paintings are often no more than a sort of show-case in which to display those points where obsessive form and sensuality are brought into focus. Ingres spent his whole life in an attempt to prize out of himself these nuggets of obsessive form; and the intensity of this effort made him so narrow and obstinate as to seem unintelligent. But he recognized that he must reconcile his insatiable appetite for particularity with

an ideal of classical beauty, and his greatness as a delineater of the nude could be described, in modern jargon as a tension between the two." Of the particular painting of the *Bather* of our concern Clark writes, "of all his works it is the most calmly satisfying and best exemplifies his notion of beauty as something large, simple and continuous, endorsed and amplified by an unbroken outline."

To discuss Clark at length is to question in what sense exactly Shusterman traces an absence of body consciousness in the *Bather* whereas the painter is so passionately conscious of the female body delineating it against the Victorian fear of the body. Ingres might be *accused* of bourgeois sensibility by a socialist (Marxist) audience, but from an aesthetic point of view there is hardly any difference between the passive posture of the concubine, disinterested in her body meant for the enjoyment of her 'keeper' and the women in vigorous sexual union delineated in the temple sculpture of India. What matters for the audience is, in both the cases, the artist's passion for form. Would, for that matter, Shusterman prefer the picture of an Indian *mithuna* sculpture in which both the partners are passionately conscious of their bodies? The questions that he puts on the pages XI-XII and proposes to answer them in his book are, honestly speaking, of ethical and socio-religious interest not of aesthetical in any possible way. Therefore, it is difficult to understand whether his notion of cultivation of body consciousness or exercise of heightened somatic awareness that philosophy's commitment to self-knowledge entails is relevantly correlated with a branch of aesthetics that might be called "somaesthetics".It seems,he proposes somaesthetics as an (interdisciplinary) area of knowledge that is not just a branch of " aesthetics",but might promote aesthetic practices,properly understood and exercised.

Nobody hesitates to agree with Shusterman's contention, "any acutely attentive, somatic self-consciousness will always be conscious of more than the body itself." (p -8) In fact this is the very gist of the Indian yogic meditation. The Japanese *Zen* meditation, he consults, as everybody knows, is the derivative of the Indian yogic *dhyana*. However, Shusterman makes the point clear that the "forms and beauties of body consciousness" he wants to discuss in his book do not refer to any specific art historical and critical phenomena, but refer to "the critical study and meliorative cultivation of how we experience and use the living body (or soma) as a site of sensory appreciation (aesthetics) and creative self-fashioning." Thus he does not deal with any philosophy of art or aesthetic theory, but proposes the validity of a science meant for the promotion of our experience of soma as creatively as we experience an artwork. In the present social context this exercise is even more necessary for our mental, physical and social health than cultivation of our experience of the beauties of art and nature. In other words, yogic meditation/mindfulness might be evaluated as an aesthetic experience meant for social health rather than a religions experience meant for mystic salvation. It is to this point that he draws our notice drawing upon the material from the six influential thinkers of the past two centuries. In Foucault's writings he explores three varieties of somaesthetics – analytic, pragmatic and practical, and even does not hesitate to re-examine their thoughts so as to accommodate them with his own ideas.

He challenges Plato's anti-somatic attitude that continued till the idealist tradition through Neoplatonism and Christian theology of the Middle Ages, and, of course very correctly demands a revision of the Foucauldian bodily pleasures that should go beyond the unorthodox sensual and sexual practices, At the same time, without sacrificing de Beuvoir's concern for the exploitation of female bodies one should look for her concern for the body consciousness in her later works. Shusterman does not spare even James' warning that heightened consciousness of somatic actions leads to failure in achieving our desired ends of higher values causing even psychological and moral problems. The cryptic notes and aphorisms of Wittgenstein that frequently imply insignificance of sensations also recognize the role of somaesthetic feelings, when he speaks of "aesthetic feeling for one's body" in the fields of philosophy of mind, politics, ethics and aesthetics. Dewey, according to Shusterman, improves over James with regard to body's role in will, emotion, thought and action.

Shusterman's use of soma in place of body, and its application in the cultivation of aesthetic values, necessary for a sound social structure lacking in the contemporary Western Culture vitiated by the overemphasis on media and information sciences triggered by the materialist world views so influential in the present generation, are certainly most valuable. His suggestion for extending the scope of aesthetics from its traditionally philosophical and critical treatments of the beauty in art and nature to exploration of beauty in somatic practices are warmly welcomed. This extension involves the scope for extending the perspectives of social, moral and political sciences that are relevantly intertwined. One may not accept the mystic and religious aspects of the yogic practices, but the emphasis on the somatic aspects of their meditation techniques are certainly of universal interest in regaining the loss in our social existence.

A.C.Sukla

Book Reviews

Nick Zangwill, *Aesthetic Creation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp.192.

Zangwill raises some very essential questions the answers to which are indeed necessary for explaining the validity of the art works that have evoked remarkable response in the last century such as that of Duchamp and Worhol. Shifting his attention from the theories and appreciation of avant- garde arts he prefers adherence to analytic trend of art criticism inaugurated by Morriz Weitz (1956) and brought out into its full blossom in Beardsley's classic work *Aesthetics* (1958). All the seven chapters in this book were published earlier in different journals, and are now correlated into a coherent argument: issues such as philosophy of art, aesthetic creation, counter examples to aesthetic theories of art, aesthetic functionalism, audience, sociology, essence, identity and survival of art are all of correlated interest that contribute toward an integrated vision of art work and its theoretical formulation, appreciation and evaluation. In an attempt for answering the question "What is Art" Zangwill prefers a methodology of *rational explanation* rather than a metaphysical one such as searching for the common characteristics of art works that are their differentia not found in other objects man-made or natural, i.e., the Wittgensteinian 'family' theory, and thus considers the issue of aesthetic purpose, aesthetic properties, instrumentalist view of aesthetic appreciation and aesthetic intention for developing an *aesthetic theory or art.*

The notion of the term aesthetics derived from the Greek *aesthesis* meaning sensation in general, and drawing upon the Kantian notion of aesthetics that refers not only to sensation in general, but to a specific kind of sensation with a disinterested attitude, that might be correlated with the Aristotelian idea of non imitative *techne*, creates a problematic network that had been the concern of the philosophers of the last century who wanted to do away with the notion altogether. But Zangwill disagrees with such rejection and states that those philospheres have failed to reject it in practice or have produced theories that are unilluminating : "The notion of the aesthetic is in fact indispensable in understanding art", because it is "essential if we are to *explain* our attitudes to art, and it is essential if we are to *justify* our attitudes to art." (p.3) Thus one is not compelled to accept the avant- garde art as "art" and forced therefore to redefine art for accommodating these arts. One might simply reject Duchamp's *The Fountain* as an art work. Similarly the attempts for defining art in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions (other than common characteristics) are also futile, simply because these conditions are the defining factors only in some cases such as mathematical theorems and scientific principles, i..e., in case of modal equivalence, but certainly not in case of semantic equivalences that are only arbitrary. If Zangwill is correct, and so he appears, then the attempts for understanding art in terms of language (Hagqberg, 1995) must fail. Each cultural phenomenon must have its own criteria of definition and mode of understanding, appreciation and explanation, although several cultural phenomena might be correlated relevantly. Ethics, language, art, religion, politics and economics are all branches of a cultural area interrelated differently in different courses of history. But it never means that one can / should be interpreted in terms of the other. Zangwill thus refers to the Renaissance Europe and Japan where there have been radically different categorizations that apply to very different things. With such a belief the present reviewer argued for different modes of experiencing different forms of art (*Art and Experience*, 2003) endorsed upon by Martin Jay (*Songs of Experience*, 2005). Zangwill suggests that a rational definition of artworks should take four issues into consideration: common characteristics, modes of production, essence and affect on the audience although the last two of these issues have been highly controversial- both of them originating from the analytic philosophy (Beardsley and Wimsatt, "The Affective Fallacy"; Sukla and Davies, ed., *Art and Essence*, 2003). Further, Zangwill does not agree with George Dickie that there is no bad art; in suggesting an *explanatory* criterion (rather than *extensional*) of adequacy he agrees with the evaluatory approach of Plato, and asserts that natural material might be value-neutral, but art, as a man-made object, is intentional and hence is subject to evaluation, although he does not agree with Plato that art's value is only *apparent*, not real - may be that some avant-garde arts differing from the mainstream works have only apparent value not accepted generally. Boldly enough, Zangwill criticizes two very influential theorists of art – Ernst Gombrich and Arthur Danto who forwarded anti-formalist and contextualist (socio-artistic/the art world theory) theories respectively. He writes, "The particular aesthetic that I develop – the Aesthetic Creation Theory – does that (accounts for the rationality or art-activities) by seeing art as having the purpose of embodying values of a certain sort. These values are aesthetic values – typically beauty and other valuable aesthetic properties… Aesthetic theories of art have a great advantage over theories that privilege ideological, cognitive or emotional purposes of art. Aesthetic theories appeal to *pleasure;* and the desire and pursuit of pleasure is familiar and understandable. The kind of pleasure that aesthetic theories appeal to is likely to be a special kind of pleasure: a pleasure with greater value than more pedestrian kinds of pleasure. Nevertheless, it is pleasure. Around the pursuit of pleasure is an intelligible and rational pastime." (p.11)

The ideas of Zangwill sounds quite traditional, and appeal, as many would complain now, to the taste of bourgeois ideology. His idea of aesthetic value as a delight of special kind, not meant for or available to the common pedestrians, echoes the Victorians and modernists like Matthew Arnold and Thomas Eliot and their followers who plead for an elite culture, the arguments much debated by Raymond Williams, his disciple Terry Eagleton and the sociologists of the Frankfurt School. Zangwill is well aware of this contemporary sociological perspective of art as a commodity of mass culture, that is skeptic about the aesthetic properties as well as our appeal to these properties in experiencing them and judging their values. Zangwill calls both these phenomena as *production skepticism* and *consumption skepticism* respectively, and

states emphatically that they are based on "multiple uncharitable misunderstandings of the category of the aesthetic" that he has highlighted in his earlier work *Metaphysics of Beauty* (2001). Art is undoubtedly a social product, but both its production and consumption are certainly not commodified as other material productions are: ghee, paper, cement, cosmetics, although one can explain why they are produced and consumed. The value of their production and consumption is not the same. All kinds of production do not have the same kind of explanation.

Zangwill distinguishes between *strong* and *weak* programmes in the sociology of art. In the former case art production is completely determined by the socio-economic conditions under which art is produced without any reference to the way artists retain their individual taste whereas in case of the latter both the social factors and the artists' individual tastes explain the production of art: "In so far as post-modernist Marxist and feminist aesthetics assume the strong sociological programme, they are defective." (p. 173).

Aesthetic Creation manifests its author's clarity and comprehensiveness in understanding and presenting seminal problems in art creation, interpretation and enjoyment. His stress on the pleasure principle might be considered a revival of the traditional views. But the author rightly consults the tradition, because the tradition of art criticism violated by the philosophers is indeed intended for finding /founding new traditions. Boldly enough Zangwill challenges these ambitious "ground breakers" – Goodman, Danto, Dickie and many others including the sociologists and feminists – who break the ground itself on which they stand, and warns them politely that they might do so at the risk of their own existence. How long can a shooting star or a meteor illuminate the sky? Ultimately come back to the same Luminaries who illuminate the day and the night - the sun and the moon are our life-long lamps to see the world both in its reality and illusions. Art is, after all, an aesthetic creation that promotes our understanding and enjoyment of reality, the tension of both a type and a token rich in properties not available in any other man-made objects, provided the epithet "aesthetic" is not trapped in any verbal circularity or semantic ambiguity : Art as an aesthetic creation must be aesthetically appreciated by an aesthetic perception. If this is the hard truth, then why the aestheticians dabble in exercises that probe into exploring unaesthetic factors in aesthetic objects? Only two answers are there to meet this ticklish question – because they understand or propose to understand aesthetics as an unaesthetic area of human exercise, or perhaps, they propose for an unlimited semantic extension of the epithet itself.

Geoffery Samuel, *The Origins of Yoga and Tantra: Indic Religions to the Thirteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp.422.

The book ,as the author suggests, origins in his direct association with some of the relevant areas of the Tibetan and Indian religious systems as well as in a scholarly insight into the social and anthropological perspectives of these cultural contexts.

Another important reason behind the author's undertaking of this project is the immense growth of sincere interest in these areas noticed among the global population. So the "impetus behind this book is the desire to understand what these developments mean, and what yoga, meditation and tantra have become and might still become within their new global context". (p.2) What is immediately realized is the difference between the present work and the legendary work of Late Mircea Eliade under the supervision of Surendranath Dasgupta at Calcutta University during the first half of the twentieth century. The author confesses that he is not a Sanskritist and his approach to the subject is anthropological as he does not explore new facts and cults, but *re-examines* the facts already explored in the history of these religious practices keeping the relevance in view in the present context of our global culture.

The first five chapters focus on the early growth of Buddhism, Jainism and the renunciation traditions within Brahminical religion (4^{th}-2^{nd} c B.C.), and the chapters 10-12 cover the period from the 5^{th} to 12^{th} centuries, the former phase dealing with the development of yogic and meditation techniques whereas the second phase dealing with the growth of tantric practices and the interrelationship of yoga and tantra. These are the two key periods, the author thinks, that reflect the origin and development of the techniques for training and controlling the human mind-body complex, reshaping the human consciousness for attaining higher values than the workaday life proposes. Thus, yoga and tantras presuppose to identify a meaning of human life as against the skepticism, nihilism and materialism of the Western world that altogether reject the issue of meaning of human life simply as an illusion and therefore meaningless- a deception, a false consciousness called ideology.

The author traces the history of religion in the Indian subcontinent back to its Indo-Aryan period, because yoga and tantra, his subjects of research, form parts of this religious tradition, and it is this religion that provides a scope for attaining values higher than what humanity attains through other areas of activities and practices. He traces how the Vedic values culminated in *mok¾a* or liberation that involved observation of moral and ascetic rules (*vratas*) and practice of austerity (*tapas*) both counted as necessary parts of yoga and tantra *sâdhana* processes of the Buddhist and Brahmanic traditions. The historical and practical dimensions of the terms such as *brahmacârin, tapas, dharma* and *vrata* that he describes are quite helpful for understanding their occurrences in the later Brahmanic texts such as Patañjali's yoga aphorisms and the *Bhagavadgîtâ*. Samuel has been truly a historian of religion in this regard, although he uses the secondary sources rather too often. What is most interesting in his searches is the growth of Indian religion amidst a very healthy blending and intertwining of the Brahmanic and non-Brahmanic, particularly Buddhist, traditions frequently one complementing the other.

But the author comes to the core of his topics of discussion only after traveling more than half of his journey- i.e. to the concept of *dhyâna* and *samâdhi* on pages 218 ff. His observation that the Brahmanic concept of *samâdhi* in Patañjali draws upon the

Buddhist notion preached by Buddhagho¾a (5th c.) is controversial – why should it not be the reverse? Patañjali's yoga aphorisms cannot be stretched to such a later period of history. If there is a question of "may or may not" in identifying the grammarian and the yogacæ¢strî, I have always regarded them the same person belonging to the 2nd c. B.C. I say, Buddhagho¾a draws upon the Brahmanic texts. Apart from the historical considerations, what is most disappointing is the author's dealing with the central issues of the yoga and tantra systems of the Indian religion: his differentiating meditation from yoga is unsound and his failure in understanding the interrelationship of yoga and tantra is also only too obvious to point out. *Samâdhi* or focus on the body-mind unity and beyond is undoubtedly the ultimate aim of meditation that forms the major part of yoga *sâdhana.* Had he been a real practitioner of yoga, he should have mentioned the importance of *prânâyâma* with *khecarî* posture and should have explored the significance of such practice in going beyond the experience of our psychic existence. Breathing exercise and breath watching exercises are the most essential techniques of yoga which are followed by both the Brahminic and Buddhist schools, and their origins can be traced beyond the Vedic period – to even their Indo-Aryan origin. *Samâdhi* in its two levels –determinate (*vikalpaka*) and indeterminate (*nirvikalpaka*) - refers to a gradual progress from the semi-concentrative status to the absolute merger in the *vijñâna* level of experience that completely lacks any mind-body awareness. This might be explained in terms of the Buddhist notion of the experience of emptiness (*úûnyatâ*).

One can fairly assume that the tantric practices of both the Brahmanic and Buddhist traditions draw profoundly on the Vedic scriptures, particularly from the *Atharvaveda* and grow up complementing each other in their rivalry to each other, both supported and opposed by the prevalent administrative systems. Obviously, Buddhist systems of yoga and tantra were under great constraint since the fall of the Mauryan empire that was taken over by the Brahmanic rulers of the Sunga and Ka´va rulers, and for several centuries later Buddhism failed to rival Bahmanism, the latter continuing to supersede and assimilate most of the Buddhist methods of worship, meditation and philosophisation till the 8th c. A.D. when the former was finally expelled to Tibet and other places of Indian subcontinent – the south-east and Eastern Asia. Harsavardhana (7th c. AD) being the last patron of Buddhism (on par with Brahminism) and Islamic invasions frequently destroying the Buddhist shrines in the North-Western Himalayan valleys, Brahminic practices remain constant in converting almost all the Buddhist tantric deities into their Brahmanic counterparts as also converting their techniques of *sâdhana* including *mantras* and *man²alas* into the Brahmanic systems.

Geoffrey Samuel is mostly successful in surveying a vast source of secondary materials without any original insight in synthesizing them to impress and encourage his readers for a useful reading.

Rita Felski (Ed.), *Rethinking Tragedy,* Baltimore County: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008, pp.368.

In recent days "tragedy" is being rightly rethought. A form of drama that

evolved out of the Hellenic experience of life and its manifestation in rituals that provided the Greeks with an understanding of the major crisis of life – suffering and the possible way for its redemption either by ethical practices or by unconditional surrender to the invisible and unsurpassable destiny – is now re-examined in social and aesthetic perspectives. It has been a serious critical question whether tragedy should be understood and explained in its classical social perspectives only, and therefore the aesthetic genre be confined to its historical origin and development, or be interpreted in an extended conceptual dimension so that its universality can be theoretically justified in each and every phase of human existence. Tragedy is thus, now being taken out of an arena of specific world view that considers man as a puppet in the hands of destiny and, as such, he should, surrender himself to it unconditionally. The more he tries to escape it (*hubris*), the worse he suffers. The new move favours a total rejection of destiny. All suffering is man- made, a social factor due to a type of political economy that controls the destiny of the majority of people by way of exploitation, and, therefore, tragedy is a historical art form that changes its pattern from time to time. No metaphysical world view is necessary for its understanding, and, therefore, no religious method is granted for its relief. The grandeur of tragic hero (*hamartia*) is reduced to a common man's struggle for existence against all odds of the capitalist economy. Aristotelian tragic emotions of pity and fear have lost their religious dimensions in the socialist perspectives of the British Marxist Raymond Williams where they are simply political and historical originations that deny the very idea of humanity. Following him, Terry Eagleton, his distinguished disciple, comments that "One of the most poignant tragedies of our time is the fact that socialism has proved least possible when it is most necessary" (2003:59). Whereas Georg Steiner announced long back that "tragedy as a form of drama is not universal… And nearly till the moment of their decline, the tragic forms are Hellenic" (1961:3), recent thinkers insist on the continuity of this literary genre through the course of history with new definitions and perspectives of the sense of tragic in life and its representation in art forms that can be validly called tragedy in ever-changing aesthetic norms and criteria. Substantial contributions have been made by the philosophers of modernist and postmodernist traditions such as Hegel, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Camus and Girard to the Platonic and Aristotelian perspectives along with the (French) classical tragedies and their successors in the European, American and colonial cultures.

The origin of tragedy in the sixth-century(B.C.) Athens was of ethical and philosophical concern dramatizing the persistence of human blindness, vulnerability and error; but, simultaneously, the fear and the need for their catharsis as a religious purification has recently been justly acknowledged. The present book evolves out of a special issue of *New Literary History* (XXXV.1. 2004) guest-edited by Rita Felski adding seven fresh essays and restructuring the volume with four systematic sections: Defining Tragedy, Rethinking the History of Tragedy, Tragedy and Modernity and Tragedy, Film, Popular Culture that follow an introduction by herself and followed by a commentary by Terry Eagleton.

Aristotle's consideration of the *King Oedipus* as the model of tragedy presupposed a speicific world view that disentangled human life from its political context and focused the meaninglessness of human life left to the determination of invisible extrahuman principles, may they be environmental or divine. "Tragedy was perceived as the enemy of politics in promoting a sense of hopelessness, fatalism and resignation." (P.4) But against the individualist/existentialist confinement of the idea of tragedy, Raymond Williams announced, for the first time, that tragedy is not a single and permanent phenomenon, "but a series of experiences and conventions and institutions." (p.5) Next turn of the feminist critics was to dismiss tragedy "as a genre preoccupied with the heroics of masculine overreaching." Aristotelian focus on *Oedipus* as the model tragedy was further elevated to an archetypal structure in the psychology of Freudian cultural studies. But alternative proposals might be made by citing examples of other Greek tragedies such as *Antigone* and *Bacchae* where male domination is not the central issue. Besides, the second point in rethinking tragedy is the Nietzschean approach that considers tragedy not as a specific genre, but as a form of human sensibility that can be manifested in several other genres such as opera, novel and poetry or film.

Joshua Dienstag, following Paul Gordon (2001) liberates tragedy from a pessimistic world view commonly associated with Nietzsche whereas, in reality, Nietzsche opposes vehemently Schopenhauer's pessimism. Eagleton and Gordon, therefore, suggest that "if tragedy is pessimistic, it must lead nowhere, or nowhere good from political perspective." Nietzsche's Dionysian pessimism or courageous pessimism is characteristically different from the depressive pessimism of Schopenhauer associated with his view of life as meaningless. Nietzsche's pessimism might be compared with Camus's notion of absurdity.

Adrian Poole has already discussed several notions associated with tragedy and the tragic (2005). Simon Goldhill highlights, in the present volume, how tragedy differs from tragic: further, tragedy as a literary genre does not advocate the pessimistic idea that human life is tragic in character, because, as Socrates has said, "pleasure and pain are mixed not just in drama but also in the whole tragedy and comedy of life." Similarly Aristotle offers a theory of tragedy, not of tragic. As tragedy does not reflect the pessimistic view of life, Aristotle justly opposes the Platonic project for banishing it from the city. Martha Nussbaum takes up the moral aspects of the emotion of pity as a basic element in tragedy and offers an erudite and insightful analysis with particular reference to Sophocles' *Philoctetes* that is rather rarely studied and appreciated since Aristotle with few exceptions like Lessing and Goethe. Nussbaum points out that it is this *Philoctetes* that illustrates Eagleton's thesis that the confrontation with human pain in tragedy is both immediate and universal: the sympathy for Philoctetes is due to "a pseudo problem bred by a bogus historicism… he is in agonizing pain from his pus-swollen foot. There is no use in pretending that his foot is a realm of impenetrable otherness which our modern-day notions can grasp only at the cost of brutality colonizing the past." For Eagleton, there is nothing 'ennobling' or 'uplifting' of suffering

in tragedy, this suffering being simply a universal "fragility and vulnerability" of the human body coming to terms with our finite and fragility that projects a political ideology. While agreeing with Eagleton that tragedy, in the context of *Philoctetes*, is a materialist phenomenon, she is rightly unwilling to support Eagleton's sweeping generalization, and investigates thoroughly the moral aspects of 'pity' in the Greek context and its cultural value in both its original context as well as in the subsequent Western cultural traditions with due emphasis on the conventional world views that legitimize aesthetic taste, which, contra Eagleton, is not merely an ideological phenomenon.

Michel Maffesoli links tragedy with the issue of world view, and observes that in the postmodern societies there is a shift from "ego-centred" to a "place-centred" world-view. Whereas there is an optimistic claim to the totality of the self, the world and the state in the tragedy of post-modernity, there is a loss of the individual ego in a greater self of natural or social otherness. The Greek tragedy stresses the role of Fortune and Fate in human life – the variety of human actions, the sense of their precariousness and the brevity of human life, simultaneously linking tragic with hedonism, with a conviction that life is not simply lived but must be avidly lived: what is intended is not simply a consumption but an intense consummation. This culture of pleasure –the passions, ideals and enthusiasms – shapes the mode of confrontation with fate and thus structures the tragedy of the tradition. But in the modernity/ post modernity opposition thoughts and lifestyles change – "in the frame work of the former history unfolds whereas in the latter the event arrives. It intrudes, it compels, it wreaks violence. Hence its brutal, unexpected, always startling quality."

Although it is not possible to highlight all the sixteen essays placed in the volume, one can assure that all of them are highly original and perceptive. It is quite natural to expect from Eagleton (Commentary) a statement that terror springs straight from the bourgeois social order, the absolute freedom of that society being a freedom in void. Tragedy reveals the limits of human endeavor that yearns for the carnal world, stuffing more and more colonies, conquests, commodities into its insatiable maw…" Whatever may be the intensity and rigor of Eagleton's arguments for reducing tragic sensibility to a political phenomenon of bourgeois democracy, a sociological perspective of human experience bereaved of any deceptive aesthetic value of ennobling feelings of pity and fear, the age-old Aristotelian cathartic perspectives of tragedy continues to contribute to human *erlebnis* beyond the confinements of any political ideology.

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